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JULY 2015 ₹150

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INDIANS

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*(And how to  
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**CORRIGENDUM:** In June 2015's "Madras café" (page 43), we printed that Park Hyatt's Executive Chef Grzegorz Odolak is German, when he is in fact Polish. Also, the Flying Elephant's Abhishek Shukla does not have an Air Force engineering background. The errors are regretted.





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Letter  
from the  
Editor



# The New Establishment

**W**hile a celebration of 50 young overachieving guys might seem perfectly natural within the present Indian context, in many countries youth unemployment is running at record levels. In Spain, it's a whopping 50 per cent. There is a sense in these countries that the best years are behind them, that prospects for advancement are bleak and that the economic tide has shifted elsewhere. This has affected the psyche and confidence of a generation – the effects of which are still to be seen. India has myriad issues, but there is a definite spark of optimism among the young, a visceral sense that one can upgrade, get ahead, do better than one's parents.

I'm delighted to present *GQ's* inaugural List of The 50 Most Influential Young Indians. This new editorial initiative showcases men below the age of 40, who are increasingly impacting how we live, work and play. They come from a variety of spheres – business, politics, technology, lifestyle and culture – reflecting not only a dynamic Indian economy with unprecedented opportunities, but also the aspirations of our vast, youthful majority. This special package has been presented within the context of *GQ's* highly stylized editorial universe, with beautiful portraits and cutting-edge design. It's also an insightful, compelling read.

Too often, due to the traditional dynamics of our society, elder statesmen cling on, crowding out the success of generations below. While some of the personalities that appear in our issue are widely known, many are not. That's what makes our New Establishment List so fresh and exciting. It's an introduction to the leaders of tomorrow, today.

Enjoy the List, enjoy the issue.

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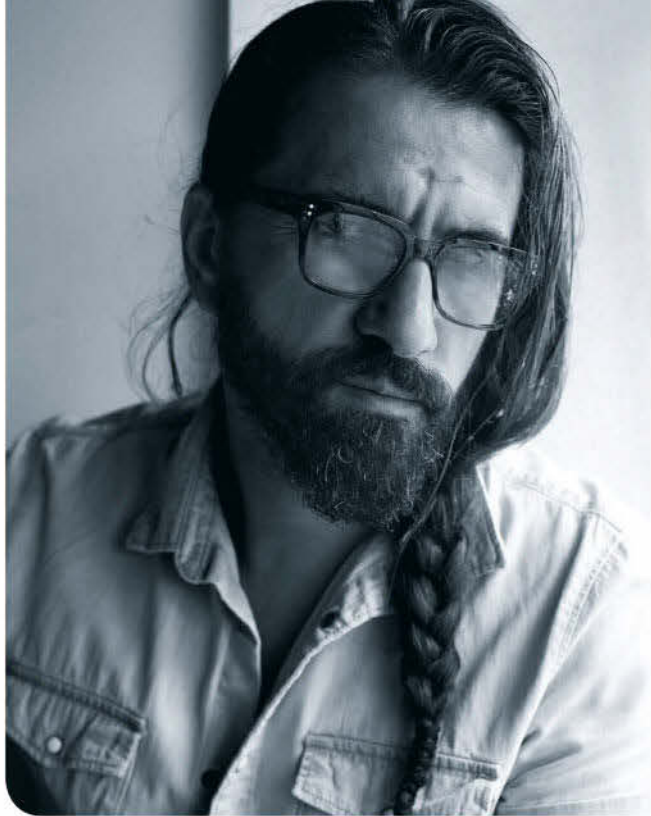


### ADAM MATTHEWS

**WHO:** Investigative reporter; amateur South Indian chef

**WHAT:** Profiles New York-based rapper Himanshu "Heems" Suri, page 138

**BLURRED LINES:** "Heems surprised me. I expected him to be a glib hipster guy but instead he was really sincere and caring and seemed to genuinely love and understand hip-hop culture. Having spent two years in India, it was also pretty cool to be able to catch esoteric hip-hop and Hindi references. Shout out to Mrs Suri for the delicious chicken kheema."



### TIBI CLENCI

**WHO:** Photographer

**WHAT:** Shoots cover star Farhan Akhtar, page 86

**TWO STATES:** "Farhan may be the star of the shoot but the dog definitely stole some of the spotlight. He's massive and incredibly expressive - at one point it almost seemed like the two were having an actual conversation."

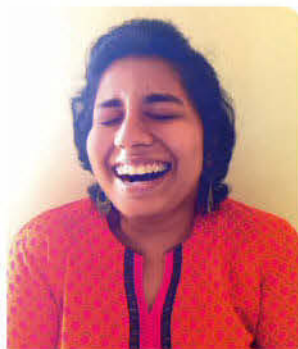


### ARJUN MARK

**WHO:** Photographer

**WHAT:** Gives us ringside seats to the season's latest trend in "Sport on", page 154

**ON THE LINE:** "We had a lot of boxing and gymnastics props for the actors - Namit Khanna, Prateik and Akshay Oberoi - to play around with, which helped showcase the comfort and easy style of the sports luxe trend. My favourite shot was of a very flexible Prateik swinging on the parallel bars."



### VIDISHA SRINIVASAN

**WHO:** Editorial Assistant, GQ India

**WHAT:** Assisted in compiling our list of the "50 Most Influential Young Indians", page 47

**CREAM OF THE CROP:**

"Influence isn't a word you simply throw around, so it was challenging but fun to create a list that featured the best from all fields, not only your typical suits. The men we've selected aren't just about money and fame. They aren't trying to outdo someone, either - each has instead given the world something to outdo."



### KISHORE SINGH

**WHO:** Author of *MF Husain, The Journey Of A Legend*; head of exhibitions and publications, DAG Modern

**WHAT:** Namechecks the great Indian women painters, page 150

**A GREAT LOVE:** "You can't choose between women and you can't choose between artists and their work - I love them all. I own many works by female artists but I'm looking to add an Arpita Singh to my collection. That, and something by Amrita Sher-Gil!"





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WHAT'S NEW ON



# GQ india.com



*Lisa Ray*

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Pune's swish set turned up in hordes

## SUMMER NIGHTS

**WHAT:** GQ Bar Night

**WHERE:** Olive Bistro, Pune

Pune's first GQ Bar Night saw a hip crowd gather at Olive Bistro to party in style. Real estate honchos mingled with hip socialites over cocktails by Johnnie Walker Blue Label, while Nanok dished out epic tunes.



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# THE good life

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## Sunny Leone

**Sunny Leone's** unusual career best represents India's complex sexual psyche: a mix of prurient prudishness and genuine acceptance. Over fusion food, the Canadian desi tells **Megha Shah** why the porn industry and Bollywood aren't all that different

**T**here's much to learn about privacy from an ex-porn star's husband. Daniel Weber pulls up in a white Audi in front of The Bombay Canteen in Lower Parel, Mumbai, but doesn't get out until he is greeted by a staff member who assures him his path to the door – all of 10 steps – is clear. He steps out, black Aviators shading his eyes, a hand on his wife's back, and walks at a quick pace before any diners, who think they might have just spotted the country's most famous former adult actress, have time to do a double take.

Commendable as their efforts at being undetected are, the couple strike a dissonant note in most surroundings: Sunny Leone, in a loud, skin-tight dress that stretches, with some effort, over her curves, and Weber, who, →





## She belongs to the new era of porn - a sex-happy generation that isn't a victim and doesn't have daddy issues

doused in tattoos and rock star charms, looks as though his skin is not on speaking terms with daylight. Together they purport an impassive, almost impassable air that seems to suggest they belong to a different world.

As they separate – Sunny sits in front of me and Weber slings himself casually into a chair nearby, within earshot of our conversation – the illusion drops slightly.

“I come from a different background from the rest of the industry,” Sunny says, with a surprisingly pleasing American lilt. “I don’t go to many Bollywood parties. I attended the Filmfare Awards this year and I know all the actresses were looking at me. I feel like the elephant in most rooms.” She laughs.

“I would like to be friends. To be able to ask questions about the industry or just say ‘Hi, I’m Sunny. I’m friendly. Why don’t you get to know me?’”

For someone who gets stared at a lot, Sunny stares back, hard. Her eyes, two pools of hazel, seem to have the ability to not blink for long intervals, and her gaze is steady.

Before she became Bollywood’s favourite new racy import (she has six

films releasing in the next year alone), Sunny had made a reasonable name in the adult film world in the US. She had a spot among the top 12 porn stars named by *Maxim*, the title of Pet Of The Year in soft-core magazine *Penthouse* – a big deal among American pubescent – and a case of ennui that felt terminal. A fortuitous call in 2010 asking her to be a Wild Card entry in *Bigg Boss* Season 5 shook things up. She flew down to India and was soon pole dancing for the contestants in one episode. In the next, Mahesh Bhatt was entering the house to sign her on for *Jism 2*.

“What many people don’t know is that I had quit porn before I did *Bigg Boss*. I was at the top of my game and I wanted out,” she says flatly.

The waiter arrives with a plate of Arbi Tuk: fried chunks of taro peppered with chaat. Sunny smiles at the food politely, but makes no move towards it. The last time she had anything fried was probably when she was staying with her parents in Ontario, being fed by her Punjabi mother.

“Working in Bollywood can be very lonely,” she says. “It’s challenging, but I’m not afraid. I’ve

done whatever I could have done wrong before coming here.”

What has she done wrong, I ask.

“Well, I mean, you know, people might think getting into the adult entertainment industry is wrong.”

And what does she think?

“I think it’s what got me to this table,” she states, simply. “Do you know what that kind of material does for somebody? It evokes an emotion, and they develop a relationship with you. There are some very powerful and diehard Sunny Leone fans out there. The kind that no Bollywood or Hollywood actress can have. So, I will always be all right.”

The next plate of food piques her interest, to some degree: Spicy chicken tacos made using the Gujarati staple, thepla, instead of the usual corn tortilla.

“It isn’t rocket science to make it in either industry,” she says, poking a fork into the meat. “For porn, all you need is half a brain and a pretty face. It’s the same for Bollywood, just add ‘Be on time and be charming’.” The 33-year-old shrugs.

“I figured out porn quickly. I started my own website. I taught myself HTML, Photoshop and editing videos. Everything that goes into marketing a website – social media, what search engine optimization is, how to get traffic. People are wondering how there are so many pages on Sunny Leone out there. That’s because I’ve been self-populating them since 2001.”

She belongs to the new era of porn – a sex-happy generation that isn’t a victim and doesn’t have daddy issues. Yet, she doesn’t pretend to have any righteous pride in her ex-profession or proclaim any emancipatory ideas, like many feminist porn stars of her generation. For her, it was a business. Quick and dirty. And she figured how to get the most out of it, without needing to give too much.

She started off only posing for pictures, and gained popularity by marketing her website smartly and by, well, being hot. She then

Thepla tacos: one of Indian-American chef Floyd Cardoz’s many cross-over creations at The Bombay Canteen



approached one of the biggest companies in the business, Vivid, with an unusual offer: to work exclusively with women. She declared she was bisexual – which only made her more desirable – and earned most of her fame through girl-on-girl content, eventually going on to work with only two men: then-boyfriend Matt Erickson, and later her current husband, Daniel Weber.

"I see the world in numbers. I was the little girl who went door-to-door and sold items for a soccer team. I sold lemonade, shovelled snow. Just to be ahead of all the other kids on the block. When I was 15, I got a job." Sunny pauses, as though suddenly hesitant to dredge up the wreckage of her younger self.

"The porn industry is a multibillion-dollar industry," she says slowly. "And it will never face recession. It's the same with Bollywood. I want to make every dollar there is to make."

As the whisky cocktail she's sipping slowly makes its way to her mostly empty stomach, Sunny oozes adrenaline and chatters on with a self-lacerating sense of humour. "There's a Sunny Leone roast happening every day," she laughs delicately. "But I don't know if I would do one on TV, there's enough jokes about me without people needing another platform to voice them on."

"You don't get it," Weber intervenes from his table. "People like Charlie Sheen and Justin Bieber have roasts. It's a huge compliment."

Weber, an ex-porn maverick himself, is to Leone what Kris Jenner is to Kim Kardashian. He is her manager and assistant, he reads all her scripts, accompanies her to meetings and shoots and even acts as her bodyguard, intimidating directors and producers when necessary. He's helped her go from someone being famous for being infamous to a star in her own right. She hasn't just invaded Bollywood, her films have metastasized into adverts for her brand.

He joins us for dessert: an Eton mess spiked with aam panna. We begin talking about the production company Weber and Leone began together, which produces porno, co-produces Leone's Bollywood ventures and sells everything from sex toys to kinky boots. "My husband owns that completely now. I'm out of it," Leone quickly clarifies.

Yet, it's clear, from the Sunlust Pictures website, that the brand relies heavily on her assets. Sunny is pouting out from every page in a barely-there bikini, proclaiming, "I will give each customer what they want. SEX!"

I ask Weber what it's like to be married to someone whose job, largely, is to titillate other men. "Sunny is the product, you know?" he explains. "My wife is Karanjit Kaur Vohra, it's totally separate in my mind. Sunny Leone is just the brand."

He says it like the whole kerfuffle isn't as dramatic as people seem to think. Like choosing a stage name feels less like concealing your identity and more like deciding a username for an internet service or website.

Leone is equally forthright about her ambitions for Bollywood: that they're big. Just like everything else about her. Together, she and Weber want to build a Sunny Leone megacomplex and keep populating the

pages of Bollywood with content – good or bad. It seems not to concern her too much that her films so far have been unremarkable potboilers or that her latest mega project, *Ek Paheli Leela*, has been awarded zero stars by some critics. It's more about her brand. She'll kiss another girl on-screen, bathe in a tub and even orgasm on call – all the while playing the lead. And the most interesting thing about it all is that she attracts a mainstream audience and sparks all sorts of conversations, quips and even a minor fight between politicians like Abhishek Singhvi and Omar Abdullah on Twitter.

"V shd be careful that western rejects like sunny leone are not allowed to epitomise indian culture or acquire the status of a Bollywood icon", Singhvi tweeted.

Leone is mostly unfazed, and sums it up with her special logic: "I earn more than the President of America. I'm doing something right." 🍷





# Sod Off, scotch

Long eclipsed by its bolder, more brawling Scottish and American cousins, **Irish whiskey** is finding its feet and packing a punch, says **Sandeep Arora**

**T**en years ago, if you'd told me Irish whiskey would be a trend, I would have knocked you on the head. If you had persisted that it had moved on from its image of being a Bath Tub whiskey I might have given you a weary look. You'd only have gotten a reaction if you'd stated that it's beginning to threaten its Gaelic neighbours, the Scots.

Today, Irish whiskey is having a moment. Once

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known merely as a drink for drowning sorrows or having with coffee, it's steadily becoming the toast of the town. And global industry experts are predicting a 60 per cent growth in the next few years.

It's had an unusual trajectory. There was a time, back in the 19th and early 20th century, when it was the leading whisky category – similar to Scotch today. Some even argue that whiskey was born in Ireland and carried to Scotland by monks. The popularity of Irish whiskey was spearheaded by consumption in the US, driven by Irish immigrants, but was hit hard during the World Wars and Prohibition. For decades after, it was considered boring and inferior, until brands like Jameson and Bushmills kicked off a new chapter working painstakingly to change the palate of hard-nosed customers who wouldn't put down their glasses of Scotch. Over time, their efforts paid off and customers in the US, Europe and Australia began warming up to the drop of the pure. Encouraged by the demand, new brands focusing on quality drams began to emerge in Ireland, giving whiskey a cool, boutique image.

India's romance with the stuff, though, has just begun. While Jameson is the best-known brand, Bushmills has a growing presence in the country. The Red Breast 12 YO and the 15 YO are finding a place of pride in many home bars. Evolved folks are also buying the complex Middleton Pure Pot Still whiskey. It is rumoured that Cooley Brands, Ireland's youngest and only independent distillery, is bringing Connemara & Kilbeggan to the country soon. And, come September, Tullamore Dew from William Grant & Sons will launch here.

Young high-rollers who enjoy a more complex taste and have an adventurous spirit will be the first to embrace Irish whiskey as their preferred pour – but it won't be long before your Scotch-swilling uncle will be sipping it in his study too. 🍷

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### TULLAMORE DEW

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## OTHERWORLD SLEEP

Wildlife spotting is one of the coolest new ways to vacation in the country. But whether you're going solo, with your bros or that potential bone partner, you'll need a decent place to sleep – and **Jamtara Wilderness Camp** has a kickass new option. The year-old resort at the edge of the Pench National Park lets you take a break from your luxury tent and spend a night in its star bed: a four-poster double bed placed on a platform in the middle of acres of farmland, with nothing but a mosquito net between you and a big slice of sky. Thankfully, a hot shower and world-class food are just a few minutes' walk away. *Bookings now open for the season beginning in October; jamtarawilderness.com*



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**4** The multi-city "experiences" on offer in 2016 are lavish. Our favourite: the International Intrigue, which includes a private dinner on the Great Wall and a game drive in the Serengeti.

*Bookings now open for 2016; fourseasons.com/aroundtheworld*

## Yin & bao

It's the year of Chef Manu Chandra. After the heady success of his gastropub Monkey Bar in Bengaluru, Delhi and recently Mumbai, he's set his sights on expanding his brand of fusion food and cheerful quirk at **The Fatty Bao**. The latest iteration of the Asian eatery opens this month in Delhi's Sangam Courtyard, alongside Ritu Dalmia's DIVA and celeb chef Marut Sikka's Delhi Club House. Expect Chandra's trademark inventiveness with dishes like crispy duck pizza with hoisin sauce and cocktails like the Mandalay Bay (jasmine tea, vodka, lime juice, orange slices, topped up with ginger beer). *Opens mid-July in Sangam Courtyard, RK Puram, Delhi*



# BUZZ

ALL THAT'S HOT THIS MONTH



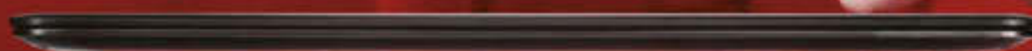
## WATER COLOURS

If Alibaug is Mumbai's answer to the Hamptons, it follows that there would also be golf clubs and an extensive art community – something the US seaside escape is known for. While building those golf holes among the sleepy Indian town's unpaved, rocky roads might take some time, **The Guild** has already moved in from the art-saturated lanes of Colaba. Currently exhibiting two films on artists Himmat Shah and Baiju Parthan, the 3,500sqft gallery is for the serious art collector and promises quiet, peaceful viewing of its works – or at least a respite from the new neighbours who keep dropping hints about using your sauna. *guildindia.com*



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# THE → 50 MOST INFLUENTIAL YOUNG INDIANS



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STUDIO

They say Age equals Wisdom. We don't buy it. At least, not fully. The 50 men on this list\* have shown that you don't need to be grey to wield power and profoundly influence lives. These guys come from a diverse range of backgrounds and professions, reflecting not just the optimistic, youthful population of India but also its dynamic economy. Meet the leaders of tomorrow, today

\* Presented in no particular order

ASSOCIATE PARTNER

**PANERAI**

Edited by **MEGHA SHAH**



# ADITYA GHOSH

**PRESIDENT, INDIGO AIRLINES**

**AGE: 39**

**BORN IN: KOLKATA**

When the former corporate lawyer was offered the job of heading IndiGo Airlines before his 33rd birthday, he was an outsider, looking warily inside. This proved to be an advantage.

He wasn't influenced by the flawed, often self-destructive styles of some of the other industry bossmen: unlike a flamboyant liquor baron, Ghosh didn't suffer from managerial hubris; unlike an NRI, Ghosh was able to adopt a hands-on approach, even standing at the departure gate checking tickets to get a sense of the business on the ground. "I got yelled at by a lady in Mumbai who told me, 'You're an idiot, you have no idea what's going on'," he recalls.

What Ghosh has managed to demonstrate with IndiGo is that low cost needn't equal low quality – evident in the innovative customer service, in-flight food and self-deprecating management style that's reflected in the front-end operations. Whether or not its rumoured \$400 million IPO takes flight ("We've appointed a bunch of bankers to do the mechanicals on it"), India's only profitable airline is in rude health. And Ghosh has proven to be the ideal captain to run this tight ship.





## SRIKANTH KIDAMBI

**BADMINTON PLAYER**  
**AGE: 22**  
**BORN IN: GUNTUR, AP**

True to his millennial status, Kidambi was, in his own words, a “lethargic, easy-going kid who refused to take anything seriously”. He was content living in his older brother’s shadow when it came to the sport he now plays for a living. Even at the China Open final against his idol Lin Dan last year, his expression remained calm, as if he were swatting away a training partner at his Hyderabad Academy – where he practised under the watchful eye of Pullela Gopichand. To put his accomplishment into perspective: Lin Dan is a five-time world champion, a two-time Olympic gold medallist and a five-time China Open champion. Beating Dan in his own den was like defeating Rafael Nadal at the French Open. Today, the Badminton World Federation ranks Kidambi as the world’s third best player. Not too shabby for a boy from Andhra Pradesh who three years ago was ranked 240.

## RAHUL SHARMA

**CO-FOUNDER + EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MICROMAX**  
**AGE: 37**  
**BORN IN: DELHI**

It wasn’t long ago that the boss of one of India’s biggest mobile phone manufacturers was schlepping through the villages of Bihar, peddling his handsets, hoping to prove to his colleagues back in the NCR that rural India would, as Sharma puts it, “buy a mobile phone that said Micromax on it.” It worked. And now he’s sitting atop a 10,000-crore company that’s duking it out with global powerhouse Samsung for the No 1 spot in a cut-throat Indian market.

Sharma’s also started an exciting new brand, YU Televentures, whose Android-based OS will “create a connected ecosystem of devices and services.” If all goes according to plan, YU just might do to mobile software what Micromax did to mobile hardware – disrupt, disrupt, disrupt.



## Satyan Gajwani

**CEO, TIMES INTERNET**

**AGE: 30**

**BORN IN: MIAMI, FLORIDA**

Twenty-seven. It’s that mystical age at which stars like Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison and Amy Winehouse died before their time. For Satyan Gajwani, 27 was when the rock star thing got started. While studying at Stanford, he began dating a nice Indian girl, whose dad and uncle happened to run the biggest media company in India, the Times Group. The Jain brothers found that Gajwani’s computer engineering background would do rather nicely for the digital arm of the media empire.

In the three years since, the programmer and hacker has split Times Internet Ltd into a cluster of silos that operate as independent partnerships – with the likes of *Business Insider* and *Huffington Post India*. “Our teams have the freedom and autonomy to aim high, and sometimes make mistakes.” His latest punt? Buying a stake in Uber India as part of a strategic marketing partnership.







## Ayaz Basrai

**CO-FOUNDER, THE BUSRIDE DESIGN STUDIO**

**AGE: 36**

**BORN IN: GODAVARIKHANI, TELANGANA**

If you've ever admired the Art Deco-inspired décor of the Bombay Canteen, or Cafe Zoe's hipster exposed brick and brushed steel environs, chuckled at the quirky hand-drawn illustrations in Smoke House Delis across the country or noticed the elegant signage at Mumbai's new international airport, you've already experienced Ayaz Basrai's work.

Since he set up his design studio Busride in 2008 with his brother Zameer, the NID graduate's been redefining the way we eat, drink, shop and play by designing hip new spaces with a distinctive, cool vibe that wouldn't look out of place in New York, Tokyo or Barcelona. And those are just his commercial projects. Basrai is also part of a buzzing local cultural scene, repurposing old buildings such as St Jude's Bakery in Bandra to function as a modern multi-purpose space. He's also the driving force behind The Bandra Project, which aims to map the neighbourhood through its people and distinctive soundscape rather than just its architecture – an enterprise that's typical of Basrai's ability to seamlessly bring together academic theory and practice. "Designers don't have the luxury of pessimism. The city is an immediate happening, and it's important to get out and contribute," he says.

## ZORAWAR KALRA

**FOUNDER + MD, MASSIVE RESTAURANTS**

**AGE: 38**

**BORN IN: DELHI**

From Dum Pukht to Great Kebab Factory, a pubescent Zorawar watched as others profited from his father chef Jiggs Kalra's wealth of culinary knowledge, vowing then to be in charge of his own ideas, creatively and financially. He got himself a business degree and immediately sensed an opportunity to nudge Indian cuisine into the conversation about fine dining. He opened up, in quick succession, trendy restaurants specializing in creative Indian cooking. Walk into the packed Farzi Café in Delhi or Masala Library in Mumbai, and the demographic is new and unprecedented: young high-rollers eating here not only because they enjoy it, but because it's cool.

The golf enthusiast, who is as flamboyant as the smoked, liquefied and spherified dishes he serves festooned with clever nods to the homeland, is now opening outlets in New York, Dubai and London, and is on the brink of hatching his fourth brand, which promises to be this season's most talked-about new opening. Pa Pa Ya will attempt to do for Asian food what Masala Library did for Indian cuisine: Destroy misconceptions.



## DEEPIINDER GOYAL

**CO-FOUNDER + CEO, ZOMATO**

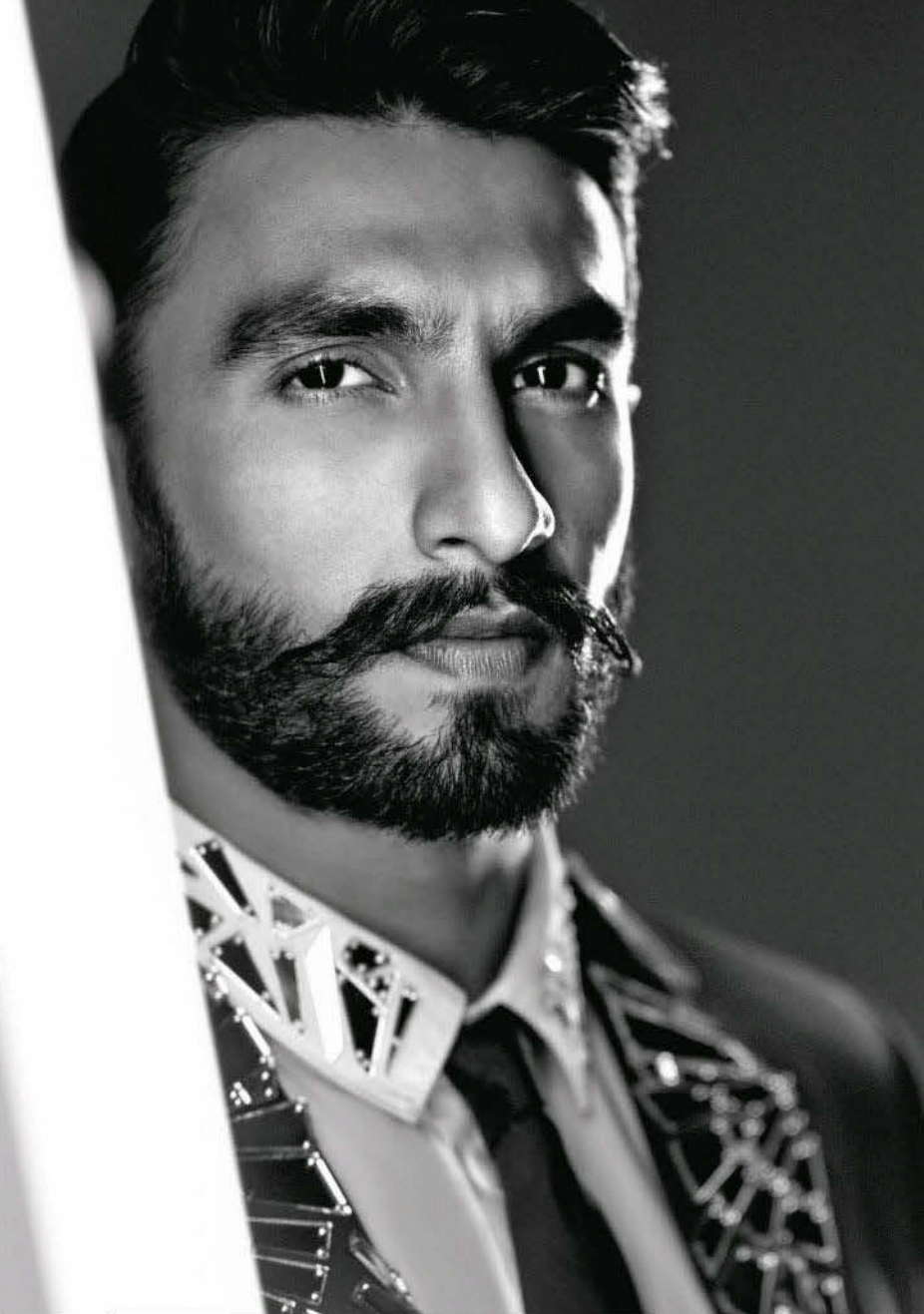
**AGE: 32**

**BORN IN: MUKTSAR, PUNJAB**

He's never been to Brazil, but Goyal's Gurgaon-based startup can suggest, to a local, the best items at a small boteco in Porto Alegre, list where to find Cantonese food in Salvador, let him browse entire menus updated every 90 days, and read comments by patrons that are monitored by a team checking for anomalies and biases. When it launched in India seven years ago, Zomato evened out the field for restaurants big and small by providing an open avenue to engage directly with customers – a game-changer in what's forecasted to be a \$78-billion industry in India by 2018.

Zomato also stands out for its seemingly simple but effective innovations – such as a newly launched online ordering service, where the company takes a cut from the orders, but the percentage decreases as the restaurant's ratings increase, and its dedicated team of data collectors for every city who are trained in an extensive boot camp and who scour each street for tiny gems. "We want to be the *Lonely Planet* of food," Goyal explains. And with Zomato set to capture markets like Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium, Singapore and Malaysia over the next 12 months, that's underselling it.

WORDS: SHIKHA SETHI, MECHA SHAH, DAVE BESSEING. IMAGE: PRABHAT SHETTY (BASRAI), MANISH MANSINH (TRIPATI), PRASAD NAIK (SINGH)



## Ranveer Singh

ACTOR

AGE: 30

BORN IN: MUMBAI

Onscreen, our favourite Bandra boy has managed to avoid typecasting, holding an appeal for just about every young person in the country, male or female. He can do *Ram-Leela*. He can do *Lootera*. He can be the most memorable character in *Finding Fanny* with one scene and zero dialogue. He can be the butt of vitriolic jokes and give back equally in a historic roast to a stadium full of fans. Then he can appear at a *GQ* event in a top hat, Muppet pyjamas and a silk bathrobe – and totally pull it off. Always looking to push boundaries and experiment, Ranveer never takes himself too seriously – a trait that makes him arguably the most relevant actor today.

His is a life pulled straight off one of those vision-boards all those people who read *The Secret* are so into. “Oh, you have to have a vision board,” says the actor. “They really do work. And that reminds me, I need to update mine.” What else is there to put on it, Ranveer? A pet unicorn on a private island?

## AMISH TRIPATHI

AUTHOR

AGE: 40

BORN IN: MUMBAI

On paper, the ex-banker’s mythological thrillers shouldn’t work at all. Even the 20-odd publishers who rejected his first book thought so. The religious subject (his first trilogy traces the transformation of Shiva from man to god) shouldn’t appeal to the urban youth, the radical take on it should alienate the religious, and the easy language shouldn’t impress the literati.

But Tripathi’s self-published best-seller not only resonated with vast swathes of readers, landing him a film deal with Dharma Productions, it also gave him the leverage to score a record deal – ₹5 crore for a quintet on the life of Ram. And Tripathi knows how to promote his product: for the *Shiva* trilogy, he placed free chapters at the till of book stores as well as created trailers and music videos, played strategically before blockbusters in theatres.

Authors devising canny marketing strategies – or getting involved in marketing at all – is a relatively new phenomenon in India, with most writers unwilling or unable to drive an unconventional promotion plan. It’s also why Tripathi’s scored the big bucks.







## ASEEM CHAUHAN

CHANCELLOR, AMITY UNIVERSITY

AGE: 40

BORN IN: HANDOVER, GERMANY

Aseem Chauhan may have pioneered private university education in India, but he didn't actually move to the country till he was 26. Once he did, the ex-JP Morgan banker and UPenn grad found his feet quickly, approaching the education trust set up by his father Ashok Chauhan like a business, swiftly figuring out how to launch the Amity brand and deciding which new projects to greenlight.

Today Chauhan, who was instrumental in setting up American-scale private universities in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Haryana, holds the keys to an education empire that includes at least seven campuses across the country and several international ones, from London to China. Amity serves over 125,000 students pursuing over 250 programmes, including nanotechnology and forensic sciences – courses Chauhan asserts are helping students “keep up with the market's changing needs.”

Right now, he's excited about a new initiative that will extend Amity's reach even further – a TV channel in Hindi, English and key regional languages that will beam educational programmes to thousands of homes across the country. “In the future,” Chauhan adds, “people will learn on their phones. We will see a hybrid kind of education that mixes open learning as well as traditional forms of teaching, and Amity will be at the cutting edge of it.”

## Pirojsha Godrej

MD + CEO, GODREJ PROPERTIES

AGE: 33

BORN IN: MUMBAI

In the murky world of realty where a developer is often considered reputable if he doesn't shortchange the consumer, the MD of the real estate arm of the Godrej conglomerate is out to clean things up. With a no-cash policy and watertight, transparent processes that won't be compromised, Pirojsha has quickly made Godrej Properties a player to reckon with. It helps that Indians have trusted the Godrej brand for generations.

Ten years ago, Godrej Properties was a relatively small enterprise. But with an ancestral bank of land and over a century's worth of business insights to dip into, it wasn't long before the Wharton and Columbia graduate was able to scale up the firm's presence to 12 cities with projects that span approximately 100 million sqft. His point of difference: partnerships with land owners for the bulk of projects instead of whole ownership – a strategy that mitigates risks. That doesn't mean he's going to be conservative: his dad Adi has set him an ambitious revenue target of ₹20,000 crore by 2020.



## RAHUL MISHRA

FASHION DESIGNER

AGE: 35

BORN IN: MALHAUSI, UP

The distance from Malhausi, Uttar Pradesh to Milan, Italy is 6,441 kilometres. Which is why when Rahul Mishra finally made that journey, he made it count. He's the first Indian to win the coveted Woolmark Prize, an award that kickstarted the careers of men like Karl Lagerfeld and Yves Saint Laurent. His collections – stocked in the world's most prestigious stores from London's Harvey Nichols to Colette in Paris – are selling out and he can barely hire people fast enough to keep production moving smoothly. But the glamour of international fashion weeks hasn't distracted the man – whose very first collection was based on the concept of sustainable fashion, a line of reversible garments handwoven in Kerala using organic cotton – from his original mission.

“I've started a reverse migration,” Mishra says. “I'm moving the embroiderers who work in slums in Dharavi back to their villages and setting up production facilities there. Now their income has increased by 40 per cent, they live healthier lives and watch their children grow up. That's the real power of fashion.”





## ARUNABH KUMAR

**FOUNDER + CEO, TVF GROUP**

**AGE: 32**

**BORN IN: MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR**

Arunabh Kumar has an air of vindication these days. The *Viral Fever*, home to humorous, youth-oriented digital shorts (a far cry from the soaps and reality shows you find on TV), is YouTube's most popular Indian channel. Their sketches rarely get less than a million hits. His first original drama *Permanent Roommates* is the second most-watched web series in the world. Today he counts Arvind Kejriwal and Shah Rukh Khan, who have both appeared on TVF, among his fans.

Yet three years ago, MTV had shot down his pitch. "This isn't what Indian audiences want to watch," they'd told him. So Kumar took to YouTube. The *Viral Fever* was launched with a 12-minute parody of *MTV Roadies*, and got a million views in five days.

Between attending creative conferences across the globe, and hanging out with the likes of Snoop Dogg and Shane Smith, co-founder of *VICE*, he's cementing his place in the industry. Kumar's plan to build a production empire like HBO or Disney is in the works; but for now, he's launching a new channel for Indian indie cinema and has rolled out an original series called *Pitchers*. "A million subscribers can't be wrong," he quips.

## ARUN CHANDRA MOHAN

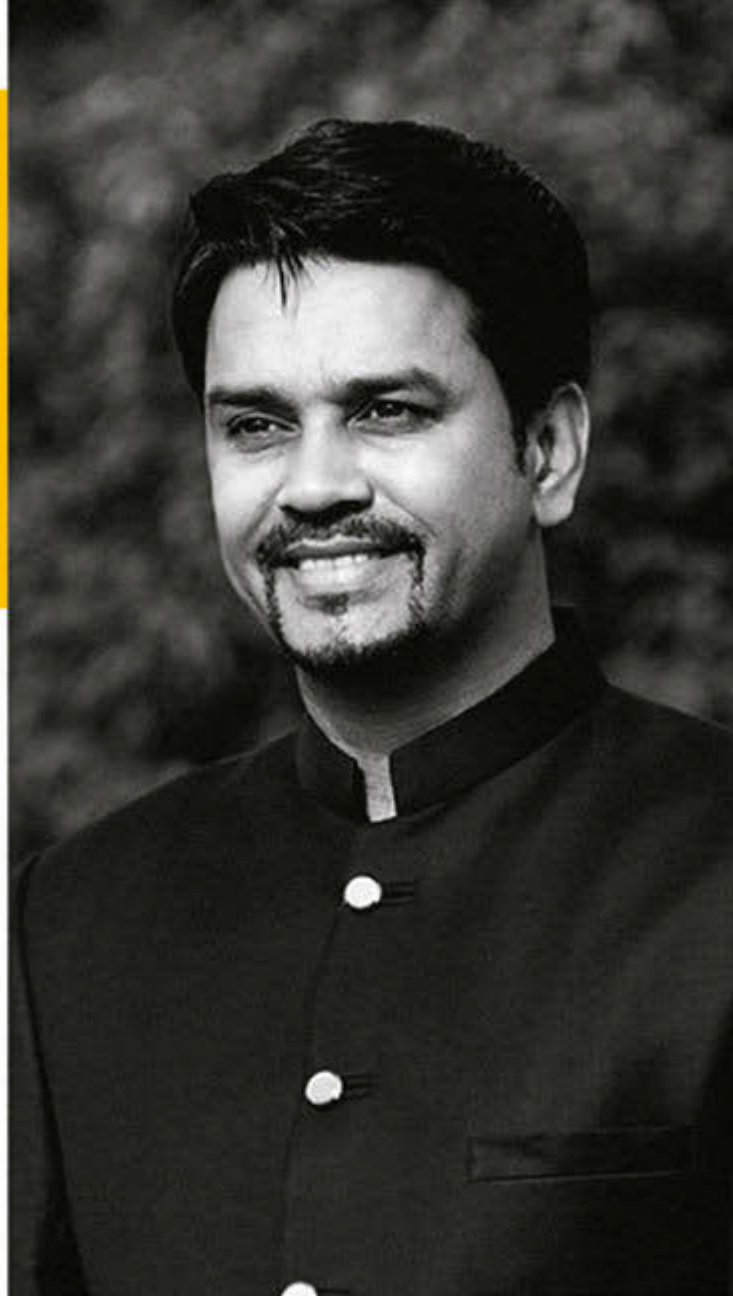
**CO-FOUNDER + CEO, JABONG**

**AGE: 35**

**BORN IN: CHENNAI**

A two billion-dollar investment in Amazon India and the alliance between two heavyweight players in the e-commerce space last year did nothing to worry Arun Chandra Mohan. The founder and CEO of Jabong was sitting confident, having entered India's e-tail fashion market way back in 2011, when online shopping was still dominated by eBay. At the time, Mohan had launched Jabong with a clear goal: to provide an assortment of high-end and mass labels to Indian millennials, especially those in tier II cities that didn't have ready retail access to brands. "Every other e-commerce portal was paying attention to electronics and books, not realizing that fashion is essential to young India, and that they'll spend money to look good," says Mohan.

Recently, Mohan has kicked his brand's presence into overdrive, creating a partnership with Lakmé Fashion Week, roping in Rohit Bal and Gaurav Gupta to design collections and teaming up with Alia Bhatt for a fashion line. The effect: everyone from Delhi socialites to undergraduates in Jharkhand are swiping away on Jabong.



## Anurag Thakur

**SECRETARY, BCCI + PRESIDENT OF BJP'S YOUTH WING**

**AGE: 40**

**BORN IN: HAMIRPUR, HIMACHAL PRADESH**

As the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Anurag Thakur is the youthful face of an organization seen as the preserve of powerful, crusty old men. The two-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh is the man every faction in the BCCI wants to court, and he's tipped to be Board President in 2017, when the North Zone gets its turn at the top. It helps that he knows his way around the corridors of power – he's the President of the BJP's Youth Wing, and his father, Prem Kumar Dhumal, is a former Chief Minister. Yet his personal achievements are significant too, none more impressive than the spectacular new stadium he helped build in Dharamsala, set against the backdrop of snow-clad peaks – arguably one of the most scenic cricket grounds in the world. But his real focus will be keeping the BCCI out of controversy, as well as meeting his stated commitment to transparency and accountability – something that's been in short supply in recent years.





## VIJAY & AJAY NAIR

FOUNDER + CEO, CFO + DIRECTOR,  
ONLY MUCH LOUDER (OML)

AGES: 32, 34

BORN IN: MUMBAI



If you're under 35, you know that the festival marketed as India's happiest, NH7 Weekender, is hitting Shillong this year. The guys behind the festival, Vijay and Ajay Nair, are unfazed that they'll have to bank heavily on the local population to pack the venue since only a handful of flights enter Shillong at that time of year. The Nair brothers are instead more concerned about putting out a magical experience. Just like the first instalment half a decade ago.

What Vijay conceptualized back then was an indigenous music festival modelled on international standards – the Indian Glastonbury. He'd championed alternative music for eight years before consolidating it into one ambitious property. And the first edition was special: a 3,000-strong crowd yearning to be part of a new movement. Yet, until Ajay came on board, a second edition seemed a distant possibility. The finance whiz gave the company a commercial framework, and the festival gained muscle every year with a new city (Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata) added to the schedule. Their company, Only Much Louder, also produced the notorious AIB roast last year, besides flying in David Guetta and Norah Jones, as well as managing artists like Pentagram, Nucleya and Dualist Inquiry. Thanks to the Nairs, strident teenagers, scenesters, networking yuppies and 40-plus folks alike are now all part of India's music revolution.

## Rohan Murty

ENDOWER OF THE MURTY CLASSICAL  
LIBRARY OF INDIA

AGE: 31

BORN IN: BENGALURU

After breezing through a Harvard PhD, Rohan Murty, computer scientist and son of Infosys founder Narayana Murthy decided to come home and go back in time. Teaming up with Columbia University's South Asia specialist Sheldon Pollock, Murty's \$5.2 million gift has furnished an endowment that will see over 500 ancient Indian classics translated into English from over 20 Indian languages.

"We plan on publishing three to five books every year for the next 100 years," says Murty and that, "My only desire is for everybody to appreciate the deep value of ancient Indian literature. Nothing more, nothing less." In an age where some wish to anchor India's future to a past of their own fashioning, exposing as many people as possible to our dizzyingly diverse history can be nothing but a good thing.





## RAJEEV MASAND

FILM CRITIC, TV HOST  
AGE: 36  
BORN IN: MUMBAI

These days, writing a movie review is modus operandi No. 1 for any inexperienced hack looking to hold forth online, and film experts are now competing with a bunch of kids fishing for hits with clickbait. But it's not all a lost art – there are a handful of film critics in India people still take seriously, including the 640,000 folks on Twitter who follow stalwart film buff and industry insider Rajeev Masand.

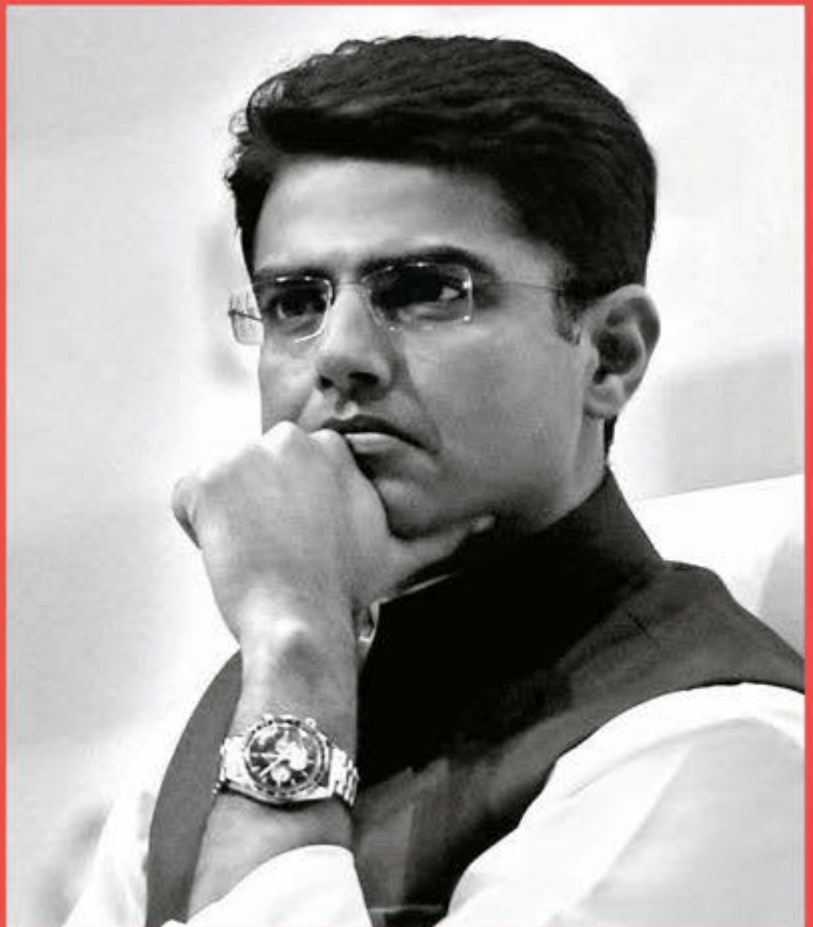
He started his reporting career at an age when most people are learning to drive, and has since interviewed every Bollywood actor who matters, hosted three TV shows, and is Hollywood's man in Mumbai. No Indian has reported from as many Western red carpets or interviewed as many global film celebrities. In the age of digital disruption, this crafty man of the people has adapted himself into the role of a whole new kind of gatekeeper.

## SACHIN PILOT

PRESIDENT OF THE RAJASTHAN PRADESH  
CONGRESS COMMITTEE, FORMER UNION  
MINISTER FOR IT AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS  
AGE: 37  
BORN IN: SAHARANPUR, UP

Sachin Pilot is the Rahul Dravid of Indian politics: unflappable, cool, reliable, and his team's go-to guy in tough situations. After his party's crushing defeat in the 2014 general elections, and in Rajasthan the year before, Pilot was mandated to "revive and rebuild" the Congress in India's largest state and reposition it as a modern, viable alternative to the ruling party. An uphill task, but one that the St Stephen's and Wharton graduate has embraced with unflagging energy.

On a day-to-day basis, he's holding meetings with farmers and leaders of business and industry alike, while taking the state government to task in Parliament. "My main focus is on building the party's membership base, by talking to people who are not traditionally political in nature – the chamber of commerce, college students, young professionals, NGOs – to directly find out what they need, and carry as many people as we can with us." He may not be on the winning team for now, but like Dravid he knows the value of patience, resilience and spending time in the middle.



## Sameer Kulavoor

VISUAL ARTIST +  
FOUNDER, BOMBAY  
DUCK DESIGNS

AGE: 31  
BORN IN: MUMBAI

Not many illustrators can brag about having collaborated with iconic fashion designers on their first major artistic project. Sameer Kulavoor can: In 2013, he worked with Sir Paul Smith to produce a limited-edition range of T-shirts based on his Ghoda Cycle Project.

As one of the country's most sought-after visual artists, and named one of the world's "top 200 illustrators" by *Lürzer's Archive*, Kulavoor has successfully put illustration on par with the other fine arts in India. His portfolio includes designing and illustrating for brands such as *GQ*, *Pepsi* and music festival *NH7 Weekender*, as well as kickstarting internationally recognized initiatives such as *100%ZINE*, to showcase the coolest new talent in the country, which he co-founded with buddy and fellow illustrator Lokesh Karekar. He's being recognized for it, too – earlier this year, the moustachioed Kulavoor was one of a handful of cultural influencers featured prominently in Nike India's #BleedBlue campaign for the 2015 World Cup. And now, with a partnership with Nike Global on a range of cricket jerseys for the 2016 IPL season, Kulavoor is all set to go mainstream.





## ABHISHEK LODHA

MD, LODHA GROUP

AGE: 35

BORN IN: MUMBAI

Is owning a home designed by Giorgio Armani on your wish list? Abhishek Lodha can help.

Since taking charge of the construction empire in 2003, he's been striving to redefine luxury for Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad's hyper-affluent clientele. And he's made all the right moves. He closed Maximum City's largest land deal at a whopping ₹4,050 crore in 2010, has unveiled lavish plans for the world's tallest residential tower, World One, and is aggressively acquiring land in London's booming property market, where he plans to be among the top two developers over the next five years.

But what's generating the most buzz recently is Lodha's partnership with real estate magnate Donald Trump to build Mumbai's first Trump Tower, which will offer residents amenities like a private jet service.



## Pradyot Bikram Manikya Deb Barman

HEAD OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF TRIPURA

AGE: 36

BORN IN: DELHI

He may not, officially, be a title-holding king, but the son of the last Maharaja of Tripura wears many hats besides the finery of a pre-Independence monarch. Pradyot has lectured at Harvard, edits *The Northeast Today* magazine, opened an English-medium school in Meghalaya, fancies himself a photographer, and can boast of a drinking binge in Los Angeles with Axl Rose.

When home, rather than holding court in his Tripura palace, he's on the ground, in towns and villages, meeting as many of "his people" as he can, hearing their problems, and leading by example through his positions at the regional development association and advising the North East Students Committee. Perhaps he's stretching himself in so many directions because he is 186th in the Manikya line that goes back over eight centuries.

## PRABHAT CHOUDHARY

FOUNDER, SPICE PR

AGE: 36

BORN IN: DELHI

While promoting *3 Idiots* with Aamir Khan – one of the many Bollywood bigwigs managed by Spice PR – in Mughalsarai in UP, Choudhary noticed that many on-lookers didn't recognize the superstar in front of them. That got him thinking about the lack of effective movie promotions outside big cities, and he launched Spice Bhasha: an initiative specifically targeted to attract movie-going audiences in India's rural centres. Soon he had Aamir participate in a wedding in Punjab (for *3 Idiots*), Salman visit a school in Indore (for *Ek Tha Tiger*), and had Vidya Balan's promotion costumes for *The Dirty Picture* sourced and tailored from local markets of the places she was scheduled to visit.

For Choudhary, it's all about reinventing the film marketing process. Expect nothing less from the man who got Yash Raj Films on board as his first client when he had little experience. Since then, he's had a large hand to play in the success of recent blockbusters like *PK* and *Dhoom 3*, that have topped the Bollywood revenue charts. For those of you who made it through *Dhoom 3*, you know what an achievement that is.



WORDS: VIDISHA SRINIVASAN, DAVE BESSEING, MERYL DSOUZA, NIDHI GUPTA, MEGHA SHAH, SHIKHA SETHI.  
IMAGE: NISHANT SHUKLA (BARMAN), MANISH MANSINH (CHOUDHARY)

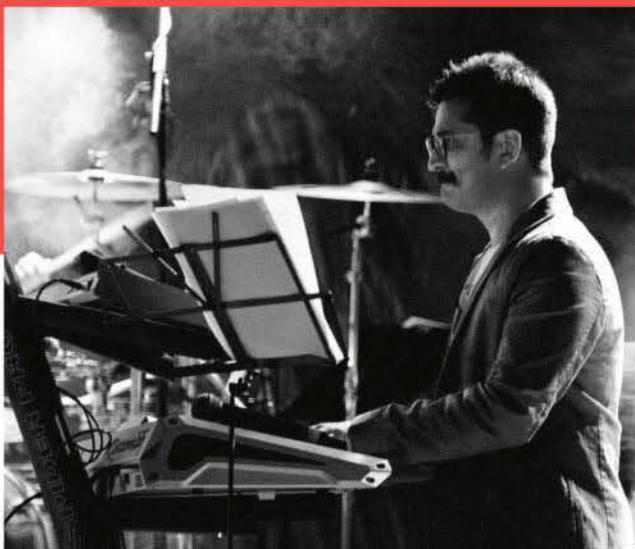


# MANU CHANDRA

**CHEF + RESTAURATEUR**  
**AGE: 35**  
**BORN IN: DELHI**

On the opening night of Monkey Bar in Mumbai two months ago, Chandra charged out of the kitchen to explain to a couple what was wrong with their order and why he would not serve it to them. The offending, off-menu request – warm brownies with vanilla ice cream – is just the sort of food the Culinary Institute of America graduate despises. “Uninspired and mediocre, engineered to satisfy the stubborn Indian palate.”

Chandra is out to change restaurant dynamics – on both sides of the table. Which is why he’s been crusading for the increased use of local ingredients – a movement well hidden behind cheerful brands like Fatty Bao and Olive, vastly popular among Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi’s scenester dining crowd. His is not a passion born out of social consciousness, though, but from an understanding of how soil can affect taste. So when three-Michelin-starred French chef and gastronomical legend Alain Passard dined at one of his kitchens a few years ago while contemplating opening a vegetarian restaurant in Mumbai, he was served local beetroot cooked on cowdung cakes, a carpaccio of tindli in three degrees of ripeness and raw jackfruit biryani. Passard, apparently blown away, never opened that restaurant.



# Amit Trivedi

**MUSIC PRODUCER**

**AGE: 35**

**BORN IN: MUMBAI**

Anurag Kashyap’s *Bombay Velvet* may have bombed, but the music score won wide appreciation. Even the film’s biggest critics were calling Amit Trivedi the best music producer in the industry. He’s probably used to it, considering he’s been called out pretty much every year since 2009, when his score for *Dev D* won him a National Award. And with every new film – *Udaan*, *Lootera*, *Kai Po Che* and *Queen* – his legion of fans keeps growing.

By creating alternative music within the larger universe of commercial cinema, Trivedi has created a genre for himself – something not many have succeeded at. And his credits are only growing. This year alone, he’s scored two big-ticket films: Vikas Bahl’s *Shaandaar* and Abhishek Kapoor’s *Fitoor*, with a strong set of projects in the pipeline for 2016.

For Trivedi, there’s only one rule: never succumb to formulas. Particularly that tired old combination of “one romantic song, one party song, one item number and one sad melancholic song”. Also, being experimental and new-agey is how a Bollywood music producer lands a headlining gig at hipster central: NH7 Weekender.

# VEER SINGH

**FOUNDER, VANA RETREATS**

**AGE: 32**

**BORN IN: DELHI**

It took till 2001 and the launch of Ananda in the Himalayas for Indian entrepreneurs to realize that they could market spirituality and luxury together, without compromising either. And so, long after The Beatles meditated in Rishikesh and then told the world about it, India was back on the radar for wellness tourism. It’s taken another 13 years for a new high-end Indian property to launch and make waves internationally.

When the MAX Healthcare scion launched Vana Retreats in 2014, a 21-acre property near Dehradun, with the aim of making it “the most iconic wellness retreat in the world” we knew we had something to be genuinely excited about. When it won *Condé Nast Traveller UK*’s Best New Destination Spa award the same year, and celeb clients from across the world started trickling in, we knew we were right. The treatments administered here (undergone while wearing Abraham & Thakore robes) bring together seven traditional approaches to health, including Ayurveda and Tibetan medicine. Each has a dedicated centre headed by a qualified specialist, with the Sowa Rigpa therapists certified by the Tibetan Medical and Astrology Institute in Dharamsala set up by the Dalai Lama.

With Vana, Singh has raised the bar high – and set his peers a challenge. “Wellness has been turned into a cliché,” he says, “and that’s exactly what I want to get away from.”







## MITHUN SACHETI

CEO, CARATLANE.COM

AGE: 37

BORN IN: MUMBAI

The Jaipur Gems scion has built a business using other people's mistakes to his advantage. The co-founder and CEO of CaratLane, the online jewellery boutique that first helped Indians trust the internet to buy diamonds, admits that the reason his company attracts big-ticket investments (a potential Tata Group stock purchase looks set to push the company's valuation to ₹1,200 crore) is because he wasn't the first out of the blocks.

"Heard of Surat Diamonds, the first guys who attempted to (legally) sell diamonds online? No? Exactly. I'm the guy in second place, driving in the first mover's slipstream. That puts me in the best position." By offering free trials at home in 20 cities and concentrating on everyday wear – smaller items that women are more likely to buy online – he's made sure the flaws in the business models of his predecessors have been addressed.

His next project, however, is a first. A jewellery retail app that he says will prove mobile commerce isn't just for buying clothes.

## Priyank Sukhija

RESTAURATEUR

AGE: 35

BORN IN: DELHI

Most of us know of the transformation of Delhi's Hauz Khas Village from a scruffy, historic neighbourhood to a trendy, urban hangout. But not many know about the man responsible for much of it. When Sukhija chose the crumbling bylanes back in 2003 for his serial restaurant launches, it was a sleepy enclave with a smattering of art galleries and fashion boutiques. Convinced of its potential, he launched restaurants like Out Of The Box, Fat Ninja, Fork You, Raas and Chamanlal & Sons, nudging it into its buzzy avatar that everyone wants a piece of today.

Since then, he's taken his brand of young, astute eateries to other neighbourhoods like Connaught Place and Khan Market. As a result the 35-year-old has 23 restaurants in Delhi and one in Pune which clocked in ₹100 crore over the last fiscal year. And he's poised to launch 12 more soon, using his unique, arguably brash way of doing business. His restaurants are usually partnerships where he puts in about 10 per cent of the investment but takes at least 50 per cent of the equity. But with ideas like a dining space with theatrical shows like The Box in London, his network of fat cat partners are willing to come to the table on his terms.



## MANU JAIN

INDIA HEAD, XIAOMI

AGE: 34

BORN IN: MEERUT, UP

On July 22 last year, in what was a dazzling debut for a smartphone company, Xiaomi India crashed e-commerce biggie Flipkart's website. It kicked off business by offering 10,000 pieces of the spec'd out Mi 3, which were cleaned out in minutes. And, over the next four months, close to a million devices flew out, putting the Chinese company, smugly, in India's top five-selling smartphone brands, in record time.

India head Manu Jain, who co-founded Jabong, was the brainchild of the operation, focusing on selling low-cost models exclusively on the internet, with no advertising costs. He helped shift the selling of phones away from physical stores – eliminating interaction with ill-informed sales staff – and moved it online, where the playing field was level and prices competitive.

Yet Xiaomi's real profit-spinning machine is the software it develops for its devices – that's laden with commercial hooks. And in India, the multibillion-dollar brand is looking to invest in startups. As a result, Jain has a kitty of roughly \$100 million – plus a little extra something by way of Ratan Tata's investment in Xiaomi global – at his disposal, making entrenched players very nervous.



WORDS: ROCHELLE PINTO, MEGHA SHAH, VARUN GODINHO, SHIKHA SETHI, DAVE BESSEING. IMAGE: ADIL HASAN (SUKHIJA), SHAMANTH PATIL (JAIN), ABHISHEK BALI (CHADHA), KUNAL DASWANI (SACHETI), NISHANT SHUKLA (CHAWLA)



## Raghav Chadha

**SPOKESPERSON, AAM AADMI PARTY**

**AGE: 26**

**BORN IN: DELHI**

"I used to think politics was a job for the unemployed or the unemployable," says Raghav Chadha. "It wasn't considered a noble profession." Clearly, the 26-year-old national spokesperson for the Aam Aadmi Party and treasurer of the political outfit's Delhi state unit changed his mind.

A practising chartered accountant at the age of 22, Chadha's chance meeting with Arvind Kejriwal ensured that his practice took a backseat. Today, he's too busy darting between the Delhi Secretariat, where he's helping Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia turn the nation's capital into "the simplest place to do business", and TV studios, where he's Kejriwal's key man on defence.

Routinely pitted against veterans well-practised in the dark arts of politicking, Chadha's youthful enthusiasm shines through. Calm and polite, he smiles patiently while talking heads around him switch between condescension and yelling. It's a gentlemanly stoicism that's all but disappeared in today's political circus. Which may explain why he's such a big hit with the ladies. Chadha laughs nervously. "There's no equipment to measure whether this attention translates into votes."

## ESSAJI VAHANVATI

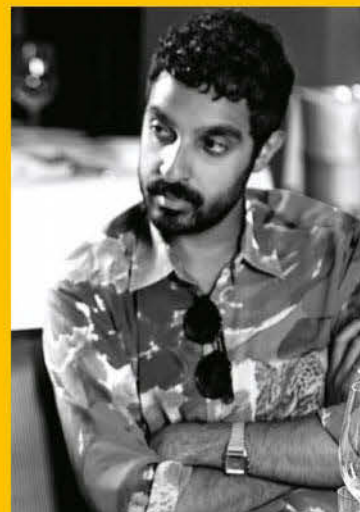
**EQUITY PARTNER AT  
AZB PARTNERS**

**AGE: 35**

**BORN IN: MUMBAI**

He fancies himself a veritable genius à la Harvey Specter, and he may not be too far off the mark. Equity partner at one of the country's top three legal firms, Vahanvati's the guy that bigwigs at blue-chip companies such as Vedanta and private equity firms such as KKR and Warburg Pincus have on speed dial to put together the legal framework for multimillion-dollar buyouts, investments and takeovers.

He's been groomed by some of India's finest legal minds, including his late father, former Attorney General Goolam Vahanvati, and boss Zia Mody at AZB, so don't expect him to just push papers based on recommendations by financial experts, as many corporate finance lawyers are wont to do. He prefers to be in the thick of the action in a bid to get results. "Negotiating is a delicate art," Vahanvati says. "You have to be patient and know when to concede and when to stand your ground. But when you get it right, it's a real high." Specter would agree.



## MUNBIR CHAWLA

**FOUNDER, WILD CITY  
+ FESTIVAL DIRECTOR,  
MAGNETIC FIELDS**

**AGE: 30**

**BORN IN: LONDON**

If you count yourself among India's music cognoscenti, chances are you've leaned on Wild City, a dedicated indie music website, over the years, either for gig listings, artist info or some good feature writing you've appropriated to sound informed in front of pretty girls. If you've got that nailed, you'll have noted your credibility depended on attending the Magnetic Fields music festival, the only one in the country with an exclusively underground line-up held in a 17th-century Rajasthan palace. And you can pretty much thank one guy for all of that: Munbir Chawla.

The multi-genre DJ, who grew up immersed in the London underground scene, has built the sort of clout that allows him to bring down names like Hudson Mohawke (one of the world's biggest D&B artists and Kanye West's producer) and Benga & Skream as well as get local, lesser-known talent a spot at international festivals like The Great Escape. Find him on the day of any Wild City event though and he'll ask you to "come party with us. We're going to go late."







## ROHIT SHARMA

**CRICKETER + CAPTAIN,  
MUMBAI INDIANS**

**AGE: 28**

**BORN IN: NAGPUR**

For what seemed like an eternity, Rohit Sharma was Indian cricket's most frustrating enigma. He had natural talent, the kind only the best possess, but was infuriatingly inconsistent in his display of it. Since the turn of the year, however, Sharma has made himself indispensable to the Indian team and his standout performance in the 2015 IPL has made a strong case for why he should take over when Dhoni decides to hang up his gloves.

The Mumbai Indians skipper claims that added responsibility has helped him perform better – a wonderfully rare trait in cricket. There've been many greats who buckled under the burden of captaincy. But he's learned from the best. Ricky Ponting, Sachin Tendulkar, Jonty Rhodes, Anil Kumble and MS Dhoni have all played Mr Miyagi to Sharma's Karate Kid. For those in the know, Rohit's the future of Indian cricket.

WORDS: MERYL D'SOUZA, SHIVANGI LOLAYEKAR, DAVE BESSEING. IMAGE: MANISH MANSINH (SHARMA), VIVEK MUTHURAMALINGAM (LALBHAI)



## Kulin Lalbhai

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ARVIND LTD

AGE: 29

BORN IN: AHMEDABAD

The selection of international menswear on the Indian high street is middling compared to fashion hubs across the world. Kulin Lalbhai's changing that. This year, the Harvard and Stanford grad was instrumental in bringing American giant Gap to India. "It will sell," Lalbhai says emphatically. He would know. Since 2009, he's made labels like Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger local staples.

Yet, this is only a sliver of what he has planned for India. Last year, he spearheaded Creyate, a nifty e-commerce venture that allows you to digitally customize a suit. He's also investing serious money into an omni-channel business model – the future of retail – where the offline and online worlds combine to create a seamless shopping experience.

## RISHAD PREMJI

CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER +  
BOARD MEMBER, WIPRO

AGE: 38

BORN IN: MUMBAI

They don't let many dullards into Wesleyan University. Pretty much a no-dullard policy at Harvard Business School. Walk out with papers from these places and "being groomed" will never be just about your moustache again. With his chairman father Azim now 70, Rishad sits on the board of Wipro, ready to keep watch over his family's 70 per cent stake in one of India's largest IT firms.

Not a bad turn considering Rishad's grandfather set the business up, many decades ago in Bombay, to sell refined vegetable oil. What makes Rishad a scion to watch is that despite the whole "family empire" scenario, he worked his way up through the company like any other employee, not walking through the back door of his father's office.



## MIHIR SHARMA

AUTHOR + SENIOR EDITOR,  
BUSINESS STANDARD

AGE: 37

BORN IN: DELHI

Who's your favourite columnist on the pink pages? Oh, you find that stuff boring? Then it's unlikely you've heard of *Business Standard's* widely respected Op-Ed page editor, Mihir Sharma. He's that rarest of rare birds: a journalist burrowed in among the Delhi power sucklings who, besides writing the most acerbic yet sharp columns about our country's politics and economy, doesn't nuzzle up or purr over power and influence. Quite the opposite actually.

And when given space to run in book-form, he got all the right people's attention. Through this year's *Restart: The Last Chance For The Indian Economy*, where he shreds apart elitist policies of the past, Sharma proves that not only can he take economic expertise and communicate it to the layman, but he can also be hilarious while doing it.





## Rajiv Srivatsa & Ashish Goel

COO + CEO OF URBAN LADDER

AGES: 36

BORN IN: CHENNAI, GHAZIABAD

There's a new breed of young Indian homeowner who knows exactly what he wants his home to look like, who can tell his Le Corbusier chaise longue from his Eames chair and scours Pinterest boards and *Wallpaper\** before deciding which sofa or home bar to buy. And chances are, if he can't afford to have his furniture shipped over from Milan, he's ordering it from Urban Ladder.

In three short years, the furniture e-tailer, founded in July 2012 by IIM batchmates Goel and Srivatsa, has become the biggest player in a fast-growing \$140 million market. And it's all because of the affordable prices – made possible by an increased focus on self-manufacturing – and a selection of some of the most tasteful designs you can buy on the internet, delivered seamlessly to over 30 cities across the country.

What's also helped the start-up e-tailer is a series of breakthrough tech innovations, including an app that lets you simulate how a particular piece of furniture will look in your home. "The future is even more exciting," says COO Rajiv Srivatsa. "Over the next 18-24 months, we will be using new technology like Oculus Rift and Google Glass to allow potential customers to virtually sit on a piece of furniture, touch it and see it in their living room."

## LARSING MING SAWYAN

MD, CENTRE POINT GROUP ENTERPRISE (CPGE)

AGE: 37

BORN IN: SHILLONG, MEGHALAYA

Nicknamed "The Entrepreneur", Sawyan's professional journey started in 2002 when he gave the North East – a region ravaged by insurgency and used to sleeping at 6pm – its first night club, Cloud 9. He was 21 years old. Almost a decade-and-a-half later, his CPGE umbrella has several hotels, including The Royal Heritage-Tripura Castle (a heritage property the company restored and manages for his good friend Prince Pradyot), and Centre Point Entertainment Network (which has brought legendary rock bands Scorpions and Smokey to the region).

Sawyan also seems to have taken it upon himself to increase the region's coolness quotient by promoting his first love, football. He owns and manages the region's only Indian league club – Shillong Lajong Football Club – and also serves as Vice President of the All India Football Federation. Using Lajong as a tool to improve standards of the sport in the North East, Sawyan in 2012 launched the club's mobile app, and teamed up with Kyazoonga.com to offer game tickets online – firsts for any Indian football club. With commercial success bolstering its on-field performance, Lajong is one of the best managed football clubs in the country.



## CHETAN BHAGAT

AUTHOR + NEW-AGE CELEBRITY

AGE: 40

BORN IN: DELHI



He may have made his name writing books, but he doesn't particularly believe in them. The biggest-selling English language author in India's history calls himself "medium-agnostic". And therein lies his edge. He's produced six best-sellers – priced like movie tickets and written, self-confessedly, like Bollywood on paper – converting lakhs of non-readers. But he's also been selling his brand beyond bookstores.

As the screenplay writer for one of India's highest-grossing films, *Kick*, or as the vaguely incredulous judge on reality TV show *Nach Baliye* or even as an earnest, slightly schmaltzy voice on Twitter, he sets about a dialogue in a way no other literary figure has managed – echoing and shaping the voice of middle India. To call his work unrefined is to miss the angle of his pitch – a careful, studied rejection of Anglophile intellectualism. Rushdie may not be a Bhagat fan, but it simply doesn't matter.



## SACHIN & BINNY BANSAL

FOUNDERS, FLIPKART  
AGES: 33  
BORN IN: CHANDIGARH

When the two – unrelated – small-town Bansals quit global online juggernaut Amazon to launch their own e-commerce venture in 2007, they probably didn't foresee becoming billionaires. Or at least not so fast. But the Flipkart founders are on track to be the first to hit the seven zeroes club in India's white-hot e-comm game.

Their cash-rich partners include Russian billionaire Yuri Milner's DST Global, Silicon Valley's Accel Partners and the Qatar Investment Authority. They're even contemplating a Wall Street IPO next year. Global investors are fighting to invest in Flipkart, which they see as the next Alibaba – China's e-commerce leader – allowing the Bansals to pretty much dictate terms to potential investors.

## Udyan Sagar aka Nucleya

DJ + PRODUCER

AGE: 36

BORN IN: AGRA, UP

Udyan Sagar, founder of the radical Bandish Projekt, "arrived" as India's most sought-after DJ with *Koocha Monster*, the EP that became an instant hit in 2013, giving Indian electronica a much-needed facelift. He unleashed a fresh sound that's towered over the scene, both independent and mainstream – a simple, albeit clever fusion of dubstep, heavy bass and fervent Dravidian temple trumpets. Today his songs "Akkad Bakkad" and "Tamil Fever" are firmly installed on every local DJ's setlist, alongside Honey Singh and David Guetta's anthems.

Still, the most telling sign of his impact is the way his tribe of followers react to his music. That is, he's put the D back in EDM. Sagar's gigs are no pedestrian, boozy affairs. They're red-blooded dance riots. Just don't ask him to play at your wedding.



## RIYAAZ AMLANI

CEO, IMPRESARIO ENTERTAINMENT  
AND HOSPITALITY PVT LTD

AGE: 40

BORN IN: MUMBAI

Amlani's first Mocha, near Churchgate station in Mumbai, has disappeared. A chic new Salt Water Café stands in its place and it's making more than double the sales. By creating multiple brands that can replace each other, evolving every brand with the changing needs of the consumer and forming a sort of collusive oligopoly with fellow restaurateur, Gaurav Goenka of Mirah Hospitality (to get big spaces at discounts by setting up their restaurants in the same complex), he's been able to crack the economies of the changing Indian palate. Today, his is a ₹125 crore business with 20 per cent profit margins and 40 outlets across 13 cities.

And as his waist-size and net worth both increase, his plans for expansion have gotten more ambitious. Having found a sweet spot, for now, with both of his hip, new brands, Social and Smoke House Deli, he's powering through with 11 more outlets by 2016 across India's metros. With constant innovation in food and a unique vibe fashioned for every outlet, he's also proven that scale is not necessarily the enemy of soul.







## ALL INDIA BAKCHOD

COMEDY TROUPE, MUMBAI

> TANMAY BHAT, 28, FOUNDER

> GURSIMRAN KHAMBA, 29, FOUNDER

> ROHAN JOSHI, 32, MEMBER

> ASHISH SHAKYA, 30, MEMBER

If you weren't familiar with the All India Bakchod routine before last Christmas, you probably were by the New Year, either from having heard about the groundbreaking nature of their Roast of Arjun Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, or because of several parties getting litigious about it. The roasters, the roastees, even members of the audience had FIRs filed against them.

Whether you thought the roast was culture-shift brilliant or irredeemably prurient, it was definitely the first of something exciting for India, an event with an influence that will only grow as time passes. When asked how he felt the day after, AIB's Rohan Joshi replied, "hungover." And the week after, once the offended parties started to appear? "It was the day after Christmas, so yeah. Hungover. But also exhilarated, terrified, and a little amazed that we'd pulled it off at all."

## KAVIN BHARTI MITTAL

FOUNDER + CEO, HIKE

AGE: 27

BORN IN: GLASGOW, UK

At 16, Jan Koum, co-founder of WhatsApp, migrated from Ukraine to the US with his family on a social support scheme. Another WhatsApp co-founder, Brian Acton, was rejected by Facebook when he applied for a job. Kavin Mittal, CEO and developer of Hike Messenger, doesn't have that feel-good, rags-to-riches story going for him – his father founded India's largest telco, Bharti Airtel, and is one of the richest men in the country. Yet the 27-year-old does head up India's fastest-growing messaging app with a special focus on privacy that lets you password protect chats and choose whether or not people can see if you've read a message – his edge over intrusive WhatsApp. When Freshdesk, a San Francisco-based customer software provider, raised ₹312 crore from Tiger Global, Google Capital and Accel Partners, the deal was closed on Hike. ∞



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What a man's got to do

# GQ Style

EDITED BY VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ  
& SHIVANGI LOLAYEKAR



“Charlie: Rain Man.  
Raymond: Yeah?”  
—*RAIN MAN* (1988)



## Dry spell

A suit that repels water?  
**Raymond's** navy two-button is just  
what we ordered for the monsoon

SUIT BY **RAYMOND READY-TO-WEAR**, ₹1,00,000. SHIRT BY  
**DIOR HOMME**, ₹40,000. SHOES  
BY **HUGO BOSS**, ₹37,500





# 11 COMMON STYLE MISTAKES

And how to correct them

ARJUN MARK TANYA VOHRA  
VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ



02

**BLOOPER: ALL BUTTONED UP**

**CORRECTION: KNOW THE RULES**

There are three ways to fasten your suit jacket. Take note. And always unbutton when you sit.



SINGLE-BUTTON



TWO-BUTTON



THREE-BUTTON

01

**BLOOPER: IGNORING THE FIT**

**CORRECTION: GET MEASURED**

You're not fooling anyone by adding extra fabric to cover that beer belly. And you're not going to look slimmer by wearing a size smaller either. Wear the suit you fit into, not the one you wish you fit into. If your trousers drag, jacket droops or sleeves are too long, find a tailor and get it fixed.

→ SUIT, ₹22,000, T-SHIRT, ₹1,400; BOTH BY BLACKBERRYS. POCKET SQUARE BY BROOKS BROTHERS, ₹4,000. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000. SHOES BY CLARKS, ₹12,000



03



*Does your shirt make you look like Johnny Bravo? Or resemble a blouson? A good fit isn't limited to just your suits.*



→ TOP: T-SHIRT BY BEING HUMAN, ₹1,300  
ABOVE: SHIRT BY THOMAS PINK, ₹12,460. TROUSERS BY ROHIT GANDHI + RAHUL KHANNA, ₹12,500.  
TIE BY GIORGIO ARMANI, ₹11,150



04

## BLOOPER: THE LONGEST YARD

## CORRECTION: CUT IT DOWN

Men tend to believe that longer is better. And while that might be the case in some situations, your cuffs and trousers don't make the list. Our guide on the right tells you what to watch out for.

→ SHIRT BY BLACKBERRYS, ₹1,900. TROUSERS BY VAN HEUSEN, ₹2,000. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000. SHOES BY CLARKS, ₹12,000

## KNOW THE RIGHT LENGTH



**CUFF:** Your suit sleeve should end just above the hinges of your wrists, with a quarter to half inch of shirt cuff visible.



**COAT:** The rule is simple: Let your hands hang straight down at your sides. Try to curl them up under your jacket. If you can, good. Can't? It's the wrong length.



**TROUSERS:** Cropped trousers are acceptable (but they only work with slim-fit pants). The ideal pair grazes the top of your shoelaces, with no more than a single, slight dent.





## 05

**BLOOPER: ALL FLASH**

**CORRECTION: STRIKE A BALANCE**

Shiny suits might seem passé - cheesy vintage Bollywood over 2015 cool - but really, everyone from *GQ* Best-Dressed dude Ranveer Singh to Will Smith is sporting them right now. Just control the sheen: a baller suit with a matte black shirt and subtle accessories.

→ SUIT, ₹9,000, SHIRT, ₹2,400; BOTH BY BLACKBERRYS. SHOES BY CLARKS, ₹12,000



## 06



**BLOOPER: CLEAVAGE**

**CORRECTION: IS FOR WOMEN**

Because a) you're not a member of 1D, and b) no one wants to see the shiny expanse that is your newly waxed chest. Do us all a favour and simply cover up.

→ T-SHIRT BY BLACKBERRYS, ₹1,400. JEANS BY LEVI'S, ₹2,800. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000

## 07

**BLOOPER: WRONG BRIEF**

**CORRECTION: CHOOSE CAREFULLY**

Your boxers popping out of your Fubu jeans was admissible ten years ago. You gotta keep it classy now, especially if you're wearing white trousers. They tend to be transparent in sunlight, so match the colour of your briefs or boxers to your pants.

→ T-SHIRT BY BLACKBERRYS, ₹1,400. TROUSERS BY VAN HEUSEN, ₹2,000. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000



08

**BLOOPER: THE SANDWICH WALLET**

**CORRECTION: KILL THE BULGE**

Don't carry all your cash in your wallet. Keep it slim, and invest in a slick leather card holder instead.

→ CARD HOLDER, ₹22,000; WALLET, ₹30,000; BOTH BY DIOR HOMME



09

**BLOOPER: SOCKS + SANDALS**

**CORRECTION: GET A PEDICURE**

Pairing socks with sandals is an absolute no-no - there's never an appropriate occasion to wear them together. If you are going to wear them, make sure your nails are cut and your feet are clean.

→ ABOVE: POLO BY CELIO, ₹1,700. JEANS BY LEVI'S, ₹3,100. SANDALS BY ADIDAS, ₹2,300. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000  
RIGHT: SHIRT BY LOUIS PHILIPPE, ₹2,700. SHORTS BY PAUL SMITH, ₹6,620. LOAFERS BY TOD'S, ₹30,000. BELT BY PARK AVENUE, ₹1,500



10

*Even when casual, keep it smart. Tuck in your shirt and buy the right T-shirt length. Throw on a belt and slip into loafers for added style points.*





# 11

**BLOOPER: BLING BLING**

**CORRECTION: DISCRETION IS KEY**

There's a fine line between looking cool and looking like Soulja Boy (yes, this is a bad thing). We suggest keeping your bling limited to a quality watch.

→ BLAZER BY LOUIS PHILIPPE, ₹8,000. SHIRT BY BLACKBERRYS, ₹2,400. TROUSERS BY ROHIT GANDHI + RAHUL KHANNA, ₹12,500. POCKET SQUARE BY THOMAS PINK, ₹2,850. BELT BY GUCCI, ₹20,150. WATCH BY OMEGA, ₹6,65,000. SHOES BY CLARKS, ₹12,000

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Highlighting, frosting or bleaching your hair – blond does not work on men, especially not on Indian skin tones.



## • COLOURED CONTACTS

Trust us, women would rather have you wear specs than have ET eyes.

## • PINKY RINGS

If you're wearing a pinky ring, you probably feel a kinship to fur coats, pimps, satin shirts and Liberace. If that's the impression you want to give, go ahead.



## • COMPLETE MESH

No one can pull this off, not even David Beckham. What makes you think you can?

## • LEATHER PANTS

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RABBIT SUIT  
CARRIER BY  
**PAUL SMITH**,  
₹27,870







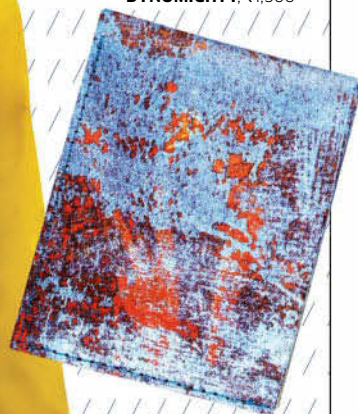
PLEU DE H  
UMBRELLA  
BY **HERMÈS**,  
₹44,500



WINDCHEATER  
BY **HUNTER**  
ORIGINAL,  
₹22,400



RUSTED BI-FOLD  
WALLET BY  
**DYNAMIGHTY**, ₹1,500



NIGHTFALL  
HI-TOPS BY  
**HUNTER**  
ORIGINAL,  
₹11,900



NAVY CITY  
BLAZER BY  
**HACKETT**  
LONDON,  
₹38,400

“SOME  
PEOPLE WALK  
IN THE RAIN,  
OTHERS JUST  
GET WET.”

—ROGER MILLER

RAIN HAT IN  
SHOWERPROOF  
CANVAS BY  
**HERMÈS**,  
₹37,000



SHOES BY  
**ERMEGENILDO**  
ZEGNA, ₹41,400



BORNE  
BACKPACK BY  
**DC**, ₹3,000



BOARD SHORTS BY  
**QUICKSILVER**, ₹15,000





60s THE MOPTOP  
The Beatles

ICONIC ROCK STAR HAIRCUTS



50s THE TEDDY BOY QUIFF  
Elvis Presley



70s THE PUNK  
Sid Vicious



80s THE SKINHEAD  
Jerry Dammers



90s THE GRUNGE  
Kurt Cobain



2000s THE TIGHT TAPER  
Kanye West

## Q1 HAIR-RAISING

I'm part of a kickass college band, but don't look the part. What are the coolest hairstyles I can get for rock star cred?

—X-poser, Bengaluru

You know, when asked about his curls, Queen guitarist Brian May once said, "I wish I had a paper bag over my head and people just listened to the music." But in entertainment, hair and music are like steak and fries. Just think about it: The Beatles without the Mod mop? Elvis minus the signature Teddy Boy quiff? It would've been a different world.

Think about the kind of music you make, or intend to make, and the image you want to project, and then meet an expert who'll take into account your face shape and complexion and give you an appropriate cut. *GQ's* grooming bosswoman Shikha Sethi recommends B.Blunt, whose Stylists create some rocking hairstyles for our fashion shoots. Alternatively, seek an appointment with Delhi-based Alex Rachid Redjem (who also crafted some cool cuts for our special grooming story back in March) – he'll sort you out.

"I have fun with my clothes on stage; it's not a concert you're seeing. It's a fashion show."

—FREDDY MERCURY

# Style Shrink

*GQ's* style guru **Vijendra Bhardwaj** addresses your sartorial dilemmas. This month: How not to bomb in a bomber



## Q2 TO THE TEE

Recently my girlfriend pointed out that short tees are the norm. Is showing your midriff really a thing now?

—Mayank, Mumbai

Your girl's got a point, Mayank. Men tend to neglect their T-shirt length, letting hems dangle below bombers or brief bands show, neither of which is attractive. The rules are simple: never tuck your tee into your trousers or jeans, and never let it hang lower than your posterior. The ideal length is an inch shorter than your bomber, ending slightly below the trouser zip when it's pulled up. And no midriffs, please, unless you're trying to pull a Miley.



## Q3 SUIT SUPPLY

I am 5'3", fit and in search of some good suits, but the in-store options don't size up. Any suggestions?

—Sarthak, Delhi

Harry Potter, aka Daniel Radcliffe, is pretty good at not letting his height clamp down on his suit style. You can either: a) find an off-the-shelf suit with the closest fit (especially in terms of the jacket length and shoulders) and customize it to perfection, or b) get a made-to-measure suit, with the following instructions:

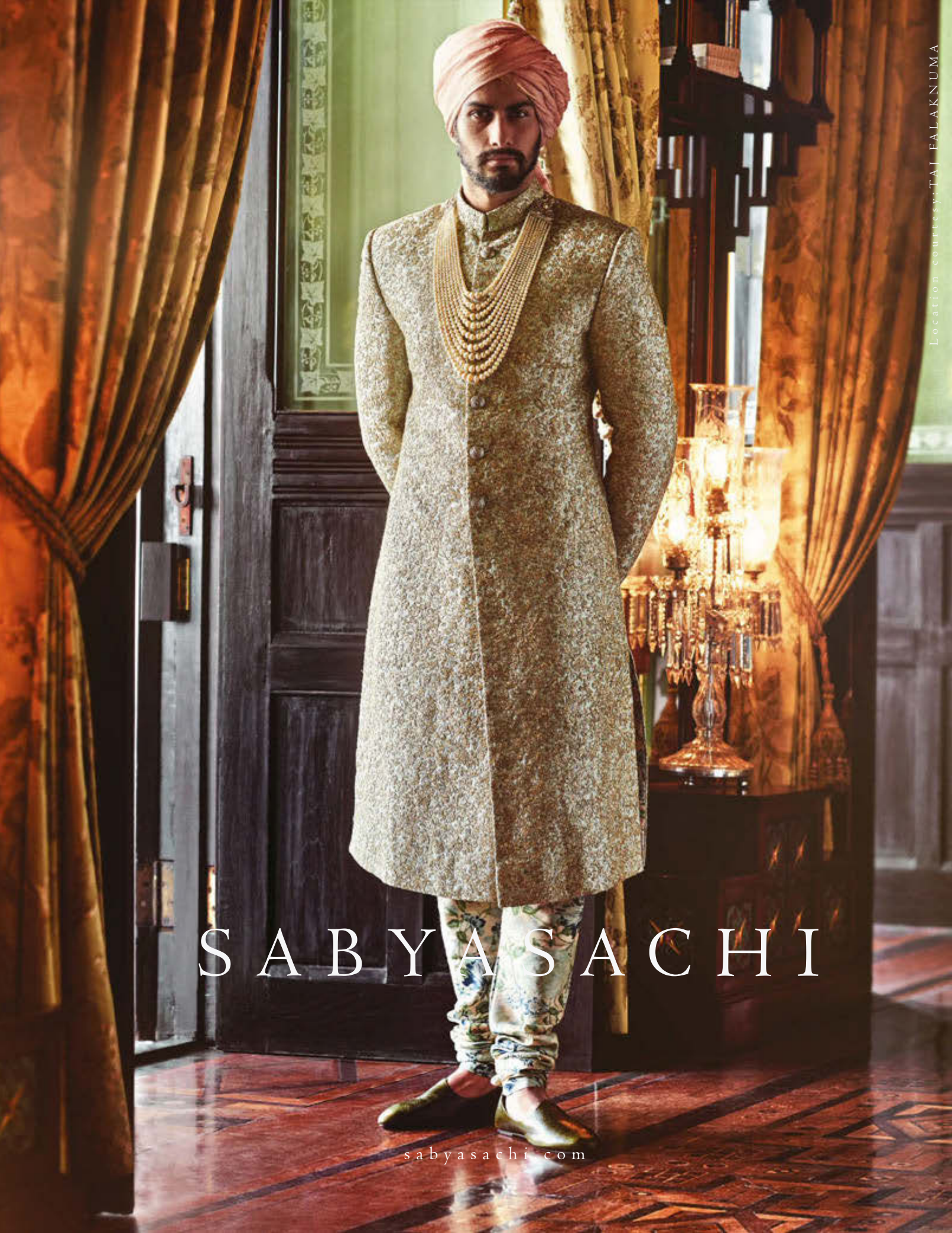
► **Keep it snug:** Go for a slimmer fit to look taller.

► **Keep it short:** Your suit jacket should end at your thumb's knuckle. Otherwise, try a shorter sleeve length that shows a bit more cuff (about three-fourth inches rather than the customary half inch) – it'll make your arms look longer.

► **Do the crop:** Omit the trouser break. Keep it straight, ending right above your shoe to give the illusion of a longer leg. ☺

Send your sartorial queries to [styleshrink@gqindia.com](mailto:styleshrink@gqindia.com)





SABYASACHI

sabyasachi.com

Location: courtesy: TAJ FALAKNUMA



# LOVES

If there's one (or six) things you buy this month, start here

**ERMENEGILDO  
ZEGNA**

COTTON & LEATHER BELT,  
PRICE ON REQUEST

**GUCCI**

FLORAL COTTON  
PANTS, ₹49,700

**LOUIS VUITTON**

CANVAS "MON DAMIER  
GRAPHITE KEEPALL 55"  
BAG, ₹1,61,100

**HERMÈS**

STAINLESS STEEL "CAPE COD"  
WATCH, ₹5,40,500

**BURBERRY**

CALF LEATHER NOTEBOOK,  
₹1,62,300

**DIOR HOMME**

CALFSKIN "GOODYEAR" DERBY  
SHOES, ₹1,27,300



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ray-ban.com

**Ray-Ban**

GENUINE SINCE 1937





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is specifically designed to capture the  
unique quality of France's finest wheat.





## CASE STUDY

Have you faced the man-bag dilemma? The need for a spacious carryall that says you mean business, but not that you're a businessman? This sumptuous **Salvatore Ferragamo** leather messenger is the answer. Disclaimer: Prepare for workplace envy. [ferragamo.com](http://ferragamo.com)



## SNIP AND TUCK

There are sleek silver tie bars for work, and then there are novelty bars like **SS Homme's** scissors for play. Make the cut. [sshomme.in](http://sshomme.in)



### TIP

Striking socks complete your look

## WITH FLAIR

**Rohit Gandhi** and **Rahul Khanna** have always known how to push the envelope when it comes to menswear, playing up silhouettes while retaining their signature slickness. Take for instance these cropped wrap trousers, which you can pair with a blazer to instantly outclass the competition. [rohit-rahul.com](http://rohit-rahul.com)

# The List

TOP PICKS FROM GQ'S STYLE DESK



## TURN IT OVER

Sir **Paul Smith's** got us putting our money on hot pin-up girls – read: sleek black wallets with peek-a-boo(b) images. Flash cash at your own risk. [paulsmith.co.uk](http://paulsmith.co.uk)

## HOT RIGHT NOW

**WHAT?** Adidas' sexy Summer Metallic Pack.

**WHY?** It seems Stan Smith's moved from the tennis court to a Jay-Z gig. The iconic shoes have gotten a sexy makeover, and are guaranteed to be the new "it" pieces of the season. [adidas.co.in](http://adidas.co.in)



## ALL PURPOSE

**Victorinox's** INOX watch was subjected to 130 extreme tests (including being frozen, boiled and doused in acid), and over 400 pieces were destroyed in the process. The one that makes it onto your wrist is arguably among the toughest in the world. What's a spot of rain when you consider what it's been put through already? [victorinox.com](http://victorinox.com)



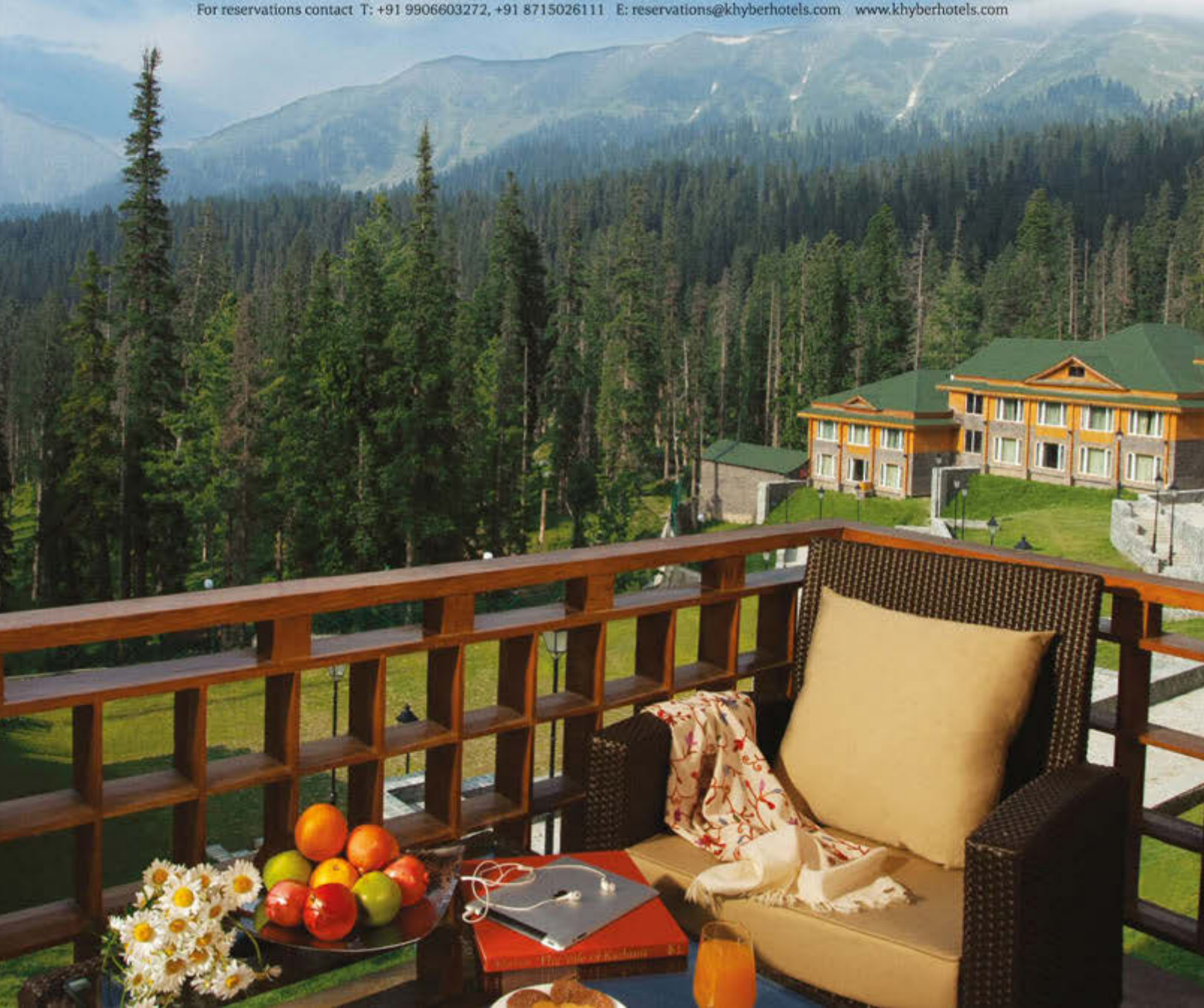


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BOTH BY  
**PAUL SMITH.**  
SHIRT BY  
**PEPE JEANS.**  
JEANS BY  
**CALVIN KLEIN**  
JEANS. SHOES  
BY **OLIVER**  
**SWEENEY**



# THE ACTOR'S

# AKHTAR

He's directed Shah Rukh Khan, written dialogue for Aamir Khan, and when on camera, he's played everything from rock star to sprinter to vacationing magazine writer. But don't call him 'method'. Even **FARHAN AKHTAR** maintains that moniker belongs to the only person whose feet he's ever touched

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TIBI CLENCI  
STYLED BY VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ  
WRITTEN BY DAVE BESSELING

It's a Friday, it's just after lunch, and his new film premieres today. He's produced it, he stars in it, and his sister's directed it. He stands to make or lose a very great deal of money on it. But he's more interested in what happens at 3pm, when the nearby pool opens and he can take his two daughters for a swim.

"I'm anxious during the two or three days leading up to a premiere," explains Farhan Akhtar, who's been around this circuit enough for the calm before *Dil Dhadakne Do* to ring true. "You're just really tired by the time it comes around. On some level, you're just grateful it's over."

Opening Day wasn't always so chill for the 41-year-old Bollywood polymath. When his debut as writer/director, *Dil Chahta Hai*, released in 2001, "all my friends were like, 'Let's go to the theatre and watch it with the crowd!' and I was like, 'There's no way. If somebody starts talking in the middle of a scene I'm just going to lose it.' For three days I pretty much stayed home alone."





"THAT'S WHAT *you*  
SHOULD FEEL ALL  
THE TIME, *you*  
KNOW? THAT *your*  
OPPONENTS DON'T  
STAND A CHANCE"

POLO T-SHIRT  
BY **PAUL SMITH**.  
CHINOS BY  
**CORNELIANI**.  
SHOES BY  
**OLIVER  
SWEENEY**

Cut, fade in, title card to Farhan's "14-years-later" house, where in a living room shielded from street level he sits cross-legged in workout clothes on a well-worn, oversized leather sofa. His maid has set coffee and cookies nearby, on the glassed-over skin of The Beatles' most famous bass drum with its faded emblazon: Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. It's not the the original, of course – that one sold at Christie's in London for over \$1 million in 2008 – but if *Dil Dhadakne Do* does what it should with its glossy stock and hi-watt cast, Farhan and his production company, Excel Entertainment, could probably justify a bid to anchor their office reception with the real Sgt Pepper drum.

Today though, he maintains there's nothing left he can fix, nothing he can say to get more people to come see the movie. The veracity of relief is visible, scrunched up into nests of baby crow's feet around his eyes when he smiles. He's also just eaten, which is a good sign – "There's a switch that goes off in my brain when I'm really hungry," he says. "I lose all perspective of logic; of reasonable, rational thinking. I'm not a nice person to be around."

You wouldn't like him when he's hungry. But when he's in a good mood, in this glassed-in room, looking out over the roil of the Arabian Sea, he's interested in what's by the window: a Gibson Hummingbird guitar, tuned down a full step to D. It's Keith Richards' preferred model of acoustic – though acoustic Keith is usually more of an open G man.

"I like the thin neck on the Hummingbird because I don't really have big hands," says Farhan.

There's a Beatles/Stones joke in there somewhere, but the more curious aspect of entering this posh residential cube is the house's nameplate outside the security gate. Upon buying the property in 2009, Farhan christened it Vipassana: a popular/populist style of meditation with dozens of spartan retreat centres around the world. (Very un-Keith, a little John Lennon, all spirit-quester.)

"I just like the meaning of it," explains Farhan, "of finding, on some level, that inner silence." But, "my actual meditation is just strumming my guitar here."

Time's too tight to surrender his mobile phone and "sit", building up to 16 hours a day with no speaking, eye contact or evening meal during the 10 days a typical Vipassana retreat demands. If he had experienced the maddening, lone fury that is a Vipassana Day 4, the chances he'd name his little bit of Bandra after the gruelling, bruising catharsis would probably decrease significantly.

Which is not to say Farhan couldn't handle Vipassana. To play sprinter Milkha Singh in 2013's *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, Farhan put in enough physical self-torture and abstemious living that his trainers were convinced he was ready to compete professionally.

"I was running faster at 38 than I was when I was in school," says Farhan. "It was pretty crazy." And as fate would have it, he would put his sprinter training to use on an off-screen, real-life track.

"Everyone knew I'd been training a lot," says Farhan, "and never before in my life, and not since, have I felt invincible... like, there was no way I could lose."

And he didn't. He "just took off" from the starting line, and it was an entrail-strewing slaughter; because the race he's talking about happened at his daughter's high school and his opponents were her classmates' fathers. He didn't need all

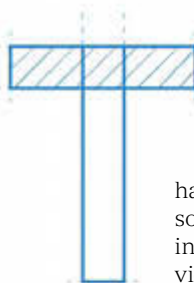
those twice-daily training sessions for months on end, waking up at 5 o'clock every morning, eschewing booze and eating only trainer-approved food – even running up the sides of mountains in oxygen-starved Ladakh – to outrun these guys. But he wasn't about to buy that "unfair advantage" bullshit. Even if meant emasculating a bunch of desk-bound dads running their first dashes for 20 years in front of their wives and children.

It's like the fixed victory of being the only biped in an arse-kicking contest. (In the land of the one-legged arse-kickers the bipedal man is king.)

Surely there must be a word besides "embarrassment" for displaying such inappropriate and tasteless aggression at the exhibition segment of your child's school track event?

"I don't know," says Farhan, scanning the wall of his living room in recall. "I didn't turn back to check."

He jokes (mostly). But that moment of invincibility, "that's what you should feel all the time, you know? That [your opponents] don't stand a chance."



That feeling is what he calls "a peg", something to draw upon when getting into character – even if it's Adam Sandler violently trouncing a Grade 1 class at dodgeball, set to the tune of the Ramones'

"Beat On The Brat" in *Billy Madison* – and Farhan took that feeling to the *Milkha* set. He'd be running scenes with professional athletes, and thinking, knowing, "I was going to run faster than them. I was going to make them struggle. These guys had no idea."

Oddly enough, despite becoming the most ripped motherfucker on the continent to be able to do that, Farhan doesn't much think of himself as a method actor. Which is strange, considering how much he admires the Magi of Method, Robert DeNiro.

Successful movie people are always banging on about how much they admire even more successful movie people, but Farhan's DeNiro fawning is up a whole other gradient: "He's the only person whose feet I've ever touched in my life."

Farhan's met the man twice, but "it was a weird thing and I didn't know what to say after 'How are you, sir?'. I'd get uncomfortable. Even telling you now, how specifically he'd wanted his martini made" – the old fella's a martini man. Who knew? – "I feel like I'm invading his privacy, you know what I mean? Like if he were ever to read this, it would be a weird feeling, like eavesdropping on someone at a party. He evokes that kind of feeling."

In the Eighties, young Farhan saw DeNiro play Al Capone in *The Untouchables* at Sterling Cinema, and was amazed the actor would "put on all that weight, shave his head, just for those seven or eight scenes. That kind of dedication is just amazing."

But more than the film that "had everyone talking like a gangster walking out of the theatre", Farhan may be reluctant to consider his Milkha Singh preparation as "method",



because there'd then be the question of whether *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* was Farhan's *Raging Bull*, the 1980 Scorsese classic where DeNiro wrote the want-ad for anyone who'd come after and presume to be transforming their bodies for a role: "Must be willing to go from trained, functioning middleweight boxer to Jabba-the-Hutt, Lounge Emcee by 'eating your way across Europe'." (Before his gavage, DeNiro's trainers had told him he could probably hold his own as a pugilist.)

As Farhan wistfully intones, "You're lucky to do that kind of role once in your career, where you give that kind of commitment to something, where you really completely change who you are... But you can't expect it. It's very, very rare."

So that's the thing. He doesn't want to close the book on that comparison because he thinks he might still get lucky and get to do it again.



In acute contrast to this process are several of Farhan's other films, like *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, *Shaadi Ke Side Effects* or *Rock On!!* and its upcoming sequel – "films that are very close to home," he says, where the characters are sort of like

him anyway, "so those don't really need a lot of time spent investing in research."

He extends a not-quite-Milkha but still pretty-toned-for-41 arm and gives one of those little hand tilts for sympathetic emphasis, "In *Dil Dhadakne Do*, for example, I do something like you. I play a magazine journalist..."

A-ha! But before any magazine journalist can start on getting him to divulge that process, maybe even offer some tips, he retracts his hand and quips, "but it's not really about what I do as a profession in the film, because my character is a magazine journalist on holiday."

Just before that can be registered as either some exemplarily lazy acting or an insulting dismissal to a most noble, underrespected and underpaid profession, there's a little forehead and button-nose of an eight-year-old thudding against the glass wall of the living room. She doesn't know that daddy's a movie star doing an interview, he's just the guy on the clock for pool time, and this Bombay summer's not exactly cooling off as 3 o'clock approaches.

"Today is just a normal day," repeats Farhan, mostly to himself, as he touches his hand to meet his daughter's. But the normalcy won't last too long, this month he's in London, "fulfilling another dream, watching the Wimbledon tennis finals."

If this has anything to do with his next "method" part as a tennis player, all you desperate housewives box-arsing around Bandra's tennis courts best beware: he's coming, and he doesn't care – he's not going to take it easy on any of you. ☺



BLAZER BY  
**RICHARD JAMES.** T-SHIRT  
BY **ERMENEGILDO  
ZEGNA.** JEANS BY  
**FRENCH CONNECTION.**  
POCKET SQUARE BY  
**BROOKS BROTHERS.**  
SHOES BY **TOD'S**

**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
**AGENCY:** ANIMA  
CREATIVE MANAGEMENT  
**ASSISTANT STYLIST:**  
TANYA VOHRA  
**HAIR:** SAURABH  
BHATKAR/BBLUNT  
**MAKE-UP:** SWAPNIL  
PATHARE  
**SET & PROPS:** HYBRID  
PRODUCTIONS  
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GQ

# WATCH

EDITED BY VARUN GODINHO

- What alpha men wear on their wrist
- Meet Marc A Hayek, the major domo of Swiss luxury watchmaking

# MAN UP

Channel your inner Hugh Jackman with these bold, badass timepieces

## BELL & ROSS BR-X1 CARBON FORGE

PRICE: ₹13 LAKH

The square is to Bell & Ross what the octagon is to Audemars Piguet – iconic. The case resembles the clocks in a cockpit, and uses a patented grade of carbon, Carbon Forge, that's also used in fighter jets. If that weren't tough enough, the case is padded with a composite of rubber and ceramic, similar to the material used in the nose of a space rocket. It's basically unbreakable.







## HUBLOT MP-05 LA FERRARI ALL-BLACK

PRICE: ₹2.2 CRORE

The La Ferrari has the world's longest power reserve on a mechanical watch. Wind it up with a special drill and it'll keep going for the next 50 days. But our favourite part? Those black barrels, which hold all those horses, and are arranged vertically to resemble the exact layout of the supercar's engine. Who ever said you can't take your Ferrari inside?

## AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE BUMBLE BEE

PRICE: ₹27 LAKH

Indian cricketers love their uber-masculine AP watches. But you won't find a bigger fan than Sachin Tendulkar, who owns a dozen, maybe more, of them. Recently, though, it was cap'n Mahendra Singh Dhoni photographed sporting this beast. What's that about him being cool, confident and clinical? #AMOG



## OMEGA SEAMASTER DIVER 300M CO-AXIAL CHRONOGRAPH 44MM

PRICE: ₹3.9 LAKH

You'll likely find an Omega on the wrist of the world's most famous spy, James Bond. This Seamaster Diver can plunge up to a depth of 1,000 feet, and with that icy blue dial and stainless steel strap, it'll look as good on you - wetsuit, naked or all dressed up - as it does on 007.

## RICHARD MILLE RM 0-11 LOTUS F1 TEAM

PRICE: ₹1 CRORE

Richard Mille is the real deal when it comes to extreme watches. Rafa Nadal wears one on the court when he's breaking his opponents with his powerful forehand strokes, and Felipe Massa sported one when he crashed hard at the 2009 Hungarian GP. You'll find Lotus' Romain Grosjean sporting an RM this F1 season, too. He's usually got it on his wrist, over his race overalls, while he's battling forces up to 5g on the track. All of which means: there's very little you can throw at it that this watch won't survive.







## GRAHAM CHRONOFIGHTER OVERSIZE SUPERLIGHT CARBON

PRICE: ₹6.7 LAKH

English watchmaker George Graham is believed to have created the world's first stopwatch over 200 years ago, but he never patented the technology. Today, the brand's best known for its trigger mechanism over the crown, which can be pulled to start and stop this chronograph.

## BREITLING BENTLEY GMT LIGHT BODY BO4 MIDNIGHT CARBON

PRICE: ₹10 LAKH

If the event tonight is important and you're unsure about what to wear on your wrist, this one's a fail-safe choice. The blacked-out Breitling with accents of red is both discreet and sexy. A bold, strong, self-assured timepiece – wear it with swag.



## ROLEX SKY- DWELLER

PRICE: ₹31 LAKH

From rappers to hip hop artists and A-listers to mega producers, Rolex has become the entertainment industry's go-to watch. With an annual calendar and dual time zone all worked into its in-house calibre, this Sky-Dweller is the Swiss brand's most complicated timepiece. But really, you're just getting one for bragging rights.

## PANERAI LUMINOR SUBMERSIBLE 1950 CARBOTECH 3 DAYS AUTOMATIC

PRICE: ₹11.8 LAKH

Titanium and ceramic were all the rage in the watch industry – until now. Meet the biggest trend of 2015: carbon. It's lighter, less corrosive and tougher than both. With this Luminor, Panerai has taken several thin layers of carbon fibre and pressed them together to construct that massive 47mm case. Big is beautiful.



## ROGER DUBUIS EXCALIBUR SPIDER DOUBLE TOURBILLON

PRICE ON REQUEST

This looks like a watch a superhero might wear. And while it'd work for Iron Man and Thor, it's really for Spider-Man. That's because the skeletonized movement with the four-pointed star is arranged to resemble a spider's web. There are also two flying tourbillons worked into that Hallmark of Geneva-certified in-house movement. Let them speculate about your late-night alter ego.





# At the TOP of his game

The Swatch Group's **Marc A Hayek** is rewriting the rulebook at the multibillion-dollar watchmaking house

**W**hen the Swiss watch industry was tottering on the brink of obscurity, bankruptcy and ruin in the early Eighties, Nicolas G Hayek and a few other investors bought a number of the financially distressed watchmakers and turned them into powerhouses under the banner of the Swatch Group. His grandson Marc A Hayek now helms three of the multibillion-dollar group's most prestigious brands: Breguet, Blancpain and Jaquet Droz. We caught up with the major domo at Baselworld 2015 to understand what makes him (and those brands) tick.

**What were some of the earliest lessons on being a businessman you learned from your grandfather?**

That your capital is not how many zeroes you have in your bank account – that's good, and gives you

*"YOUR CAPITAL IS NOT HOW MANY ZEROES YOU HAVE IN YOUR BANK ACCOUNT – IT'S YOUR TEAM AND STAFF"*

the freedom to realize your goals and dreams. But your real capital is your team and staff. He also encouraged me to pursue whatever I wanted, even if it meant not joining his watchmaking business.

**So initially you chose to set up a restaurant called Colors in Zurich?**

I learned how to build something from scratch with that venture. I had to find the location, draw up a concept, buy the products, curate the wine list, hire the staff. In a restaurant, the number of clients can exceed that in even the best watch boutique and so it was there that I learned how to interact with customers. The wine bar, for example, was about giving someone an experience that, like the luxury watch business, was about more than just selling a commodity.

**What drew you into the watch world?**

I was considering opening a second restaurant in another city, two years after Colors. Blancpain approached me about helping to grow its business. It was a high-end mechanical watchmaker that had this younger, sporty appeal. I'd always loved watches, and I couldn't resist the offer.

**What are the current production numbers for the brands you oversee?**

We're roughly at 5,000 watches a year for Jaquet Droz. Blancpain produces above 25,000 and Breguet is at around 30,000.

**Why does Jaquet Droz manufacture such limited quantities?**

Historically, automata have been the main focus for Jaquet Droz. And that itself is a very small subset of mechanical watchmaking. For me, Jaquet Droz also has to be manufactured in lower quantities because this is a brand with a very strong collector base.

**How do you take a brand like Breguet, which is so steeped in tradition, and make it accessible?**

Breguet has a rich history with its connection to Napoleon, and a Baroque-inspired French style. But that can also act as a barrier and deter people from buying into the brand. We're working on drawing that line between making people aware of this history and yet keeping the brand accessible.

**What are the standouts from the three brands this year?**

For Breguet it's the [Tradition] Chronograph that I'll also be adding to my personal collection.

For Jaquet Droz it's the Grande Seconde Morte, where the jumping seconds mechanism is very complex and difficult to do on a mechanical wristwatch. And for Blancpain it is the Bathyscaphe, which represents the watchmaker's philosophy and history.

**What are your future plans for India?**

Breguet is very well rooted in India, but it's been very difficult to repeat its brand's strategy for Blancpain, for example. We want to get a flagship store in the midterm in India.



Hayek could have been many things – a vintner, a restaurateur, a racer (and he's tried his hand at them all) – before he settled into his hugely successful role in the watch biz



Breguet Tradition Chronograph Independent 7077



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THE 20 SEMI-FINALISTS FOR THE  
VOGUE INDIA FASHION FUND 2015!

## 15 SHORTLISTED FASHION DESIGNERS

1. Aartivijay Gupta
2. Anavila by Anavila Misra
3. Dhruv Kapoor
4. Notlikeyou by Durba Nag  
and Shovit Dasgupta
5. Nida Mahmood
6. Shift by Nimish Shah
7. Not So Serious by Pallavi Mohan
8. Think Pattern Pvt. Ltd.  
by Payal Khandwala
9. Rimi Nayak
10. 11.11 by Shani Himanshu  
and Mia Morikawa
11. ILK by Shikha Grover
12. 431-88 by Shweta Kapur
13. SVA by Sonam and Paras Modi
14. ROUKA by Sreejith Jeevan
15. Munkee See Munkee Doo by  
Teresa Laison & Utsav Pradhan

## 5 SHORTLISTED ACCESSORY DESIGNERS

1. Chicory Chai  
by Himani Mantri Grover
2. Outhouse Jewellery  
by Kaabia and Sasha Grewal
3. Malvika Vaswani
4. VALLIYAN by Nitya Arora
5. SVJ by Sanya Jain



**VAN HEUSEN**  
POWER DRESSING

EDITED BY NIDHI GUPTA  
FILM

PLAYLIST

MAN SKILLS

SOCIAL 101

POP CULTURE

BOOKS

HUMOUR

# insider

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS MONTH

## AN (EXTRA) ORDINARY AUTEUR

British film-maker **Asif Kapadia** insists he's just a regular bloke, but you've got to admit: Resurrecting Amy Winehouse is no mean task



**B**efore Adele, Katy Perry and Taylor Swift became music phenoms, a sassy north Londoner called Amy Winehouse used to rule the world. It was impossible to escape her in the last decade. If it wasn't her bluesy songs, on loop everywhere from the moment →





A still from Amy

**"AMY WAS PROBABLY THE CLOSEST I'D COME TO DOING A BOLLYWOOD FILM – IT'S LIKE A MUSICAL, STRUCTURED AROUND HER SONGS"**

they arrived in all their subversive, defiant glory, it was the relentless coverage of her troubled life and career – splashed all over TV and the internet like some kind of sick, twisted reality show. You were "subscribed", whether you liked it or not.

Which is why it's a little odd that the man who has made *the* documentary on her life initially had no idea what she or her music were about.

"I knew of the tragedy, of course," says Asif Kapadia, a Londoner of Gujarati origins, in a clipped British accent. "But I'm generally more into sports – I love football, respect Muhammad Ali and, of course, you know, Ayrton Senna. I'm just not a stalker and I don't believe in that kind of fan culture. We're all ordinary people, after all."

So much for hero worship. Why choose Amy Winehouse as a subject, then? "Weirdly enough, the project came to me," Kapadia explains. *Senna*, his 2010 documentary, brought many good things, a BAFTA award, universal critical acclaim, a shitload of money (it raked in over £3 million, making it the highest-grossing British documentary of all time). And a proposition from Universal Music UK to create a similar tribute to Amy Winehouse. "When James [Joyce Reese, the producer of *Senna* and *Amy*] came to me with it, I thought, why not? In all these years, I'd never managed to make a film set in London. This seemed like an opportunity."

Turns out, Winehouse and Kapadia grew up in the same part of the metropolis – literally down the street from each other in Hackney. They even went to the same school. "A guy I know actually went on a date with her when we were all much younger – and I had no idea till I started researching for this project," he laughs.

That research involved sifting through over 100 hours of old footage of Amy, including home videos and concert recordings. Condensing all that into 180 minutes wasn't the tough part, though. Getting people – 80 of her closest friends, family and colleagues – to talk about her was: "Everyone close to her was heartbroken over what had happened, understandably. It took me a year, maybe more, to get her friends, family and the producers she worked with to open up to me."

Winehouse died of alcohol poisoning and drug overdose in 2011. But her march to self-

destruction, including a bad relationship and a battle with bulimia, had begun the moment she recorded her first song. Kapadia places the blame with a "tabloid-led society". You know, the kind where cameras follow celebrities everywhere and everyone feels entitled to every single detail about their private lives. No wonder Kapadia is suspicious of the culture of fandom.

Although, judging by the manner in which film festival frats swoon over anything he touches, he's got enough admirers of his own. Back in 1997, the Cannes International Film Festival awarded him a prize for his short film *The Sheep Thief*; since then, he's courted and cultivated a steady following at all of the big soirees – from Sundance to Venice – with his documentaries, features and short films. Safe to say that in the universe of world cinema, he's a star.

Perhaps to no one's surprise, *Amy's* Cannes screening in May was greeted with a flood of tears and a tumult of critical acclaim. What might've been a little unexpected was Amy's father Mitch whining, publicly, about how this film was out to destroy him. Of course, no one's taking him seriously – it's a little difficult to side with the man who vanished early from his daughter's life and re-appeared at just the "right" moment. "Amy was very honest, very straightforward. She just said, wrote and sang what she thought. I had to tell the story from her point of view," maintains Kapadia.

Jetting between Turkey, Azerbaijan and London for his next project, Kapadia probably doesn't have the time anyway to pay attention to lawsuit threats or even gushing, hyperbolic titles like the "King of Cannes" – given to him by the *Guardian's* critic.

"*Ali & Nino* is my first feature in eight years," he enthuses. "It's based on a book by Kurban Said; a sort of old-fashioned romantic story, but also a war tale, about this Muslim boy and Christian girl caught in a world where Asia meets Europe, Russia meets Iran, at the start of the first World War. It has a great script by Christopher Hampton, and a great cast [Maria Valverde and Adam Bakri]." He hopes to have it completed by 2016.

Clearly, Kapadia likes to experiment with the stories he wants to tell and the way he wants to tell them. But don't expect a racy action flick or superhero franchise out of him. "Amy was probably the closest I'd come to doing a Bollywood film – it's like a musical, structured around her songs," he says. "But mainstream Hollywood films? Not me."

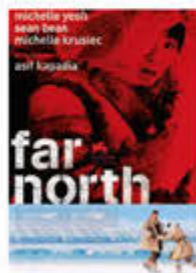
He may be all about the cinema, not the celebrity, but now that Kapadia's told his tale of London, with Amy Winehouse as his medium, it looks like he might come around to the idea of being someone's fan after all. "Amy was a very witty, bright, funny girl. She's bewitching. It's impossible not to fall in love with her."

We could've told you that in 2007, bruh. 🐼

Amy hits PVR Theatres on July 3



#### ASIF KAPADIA'S FILMOGRAPHY



● **FAR NORTH (2007)**  
Michelle Yeoh fights for survival in the Arctic



● **SENNA (2010)**  
The thrilling life of the legendary F1 racer



● **THE WARRIOR (2001)**  
Irrfan Khan tries to escape his warrior past

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# Hey Mr DJ

Meet **Jai Vaswani**, the chip slinger-turned-turntablist who's got everyone hot for his dishy, groovy beats

**M****oniker:** Nanok, or DJ Jai  
**Known for:** His 2014 EP *Fever* and album *Death By Shoelaces*. More recently, a collaboration with Anish Sood and Anushka Manchanda, the chart-topping dance track "Superfly".

**Genre:** Deep house and nu-disco

**Education:** Point Blank School, London

**Describes his music as:** "Sex music, but danceable."

**Describes himself as:** "A workaholic and a perfectionist."

**Is big on:** Collaborations. He's already worked with the likes of Dualist Inquiry, Sandunes and Nicholson.

**On his set:** "As Nanok, I play my own stuff. But when I play commercially [as DJ Jai], it's a no-holds-barred retro-pop set. Nothing like the Backstreet Boys and the Spice Girls to get a crowd going. I always play Shaggy."

**Favourite performance space:**

Olive Bar Kitchen and blueFrog, Mumbai.

**Hangs out at:** Home and the gym.

"I spend 12 hours a day in my studio, and a good 4-5 hours working out."

**Biggest compliment:** "The audiences for my sets are worlds apart. I was very flattered when this girl came up to me at one of my pop gigs and asked for 'Can Someone', an original I did with vocalist Ashna Roy. She knew my stuff!"

**Biggest beef:** People who turn up their nose at commercial music. "All these people at techno gigs awkwardly nodding along – you can never make out if they're actually enjoying themselves or there just because it's cool. Then they come for my pop sets and they're going ballistic on the dance floor. Why diss it, then?"

**Coming soon:** A brand new live project. "It'll be sexy, bluesy, jazzy; maybe I'll get a three-piece live act to go with it." The first album will release on a Brussels-based label this September.

**Fun fact:** Owns student-favourite chip shop The J at Churchgate, Mumbai.

**Mojo:** "To turn my passion(s) into my livelihood. I used to be a videogame freak. So I started a LAN-based cyber café in 2008 for my buddies to play *Counter-Strike* and *Call Of Duty*. Now I'm crazy about fitness. I think I'll open a gym next."



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 JACKET BY **ZARA**.  
 JEANS BY **GAS**.  
 WATCH BY **FOSSIL**.





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## FILM

Hollywood's summer always ends with a barrage of sequels, reboots and spinoffs. Let GQ's mood chart help you decide what's worth getting revved up over

### TERMINATOR: GENISYS

By Alan Taylor  
Unless there's a plot twist involving Emilia Clarke doing a Khaleesi and bumping off Ah'noh, we can't fathom why this is back.



### MAGIC MIKE XXL

By Gregory Jacobs  
Watch sexpot Tatum & gang strip the ladies of their sanity. And you, of your body image.



### MINIONS

By Pierre Coffin & Kyle Balda  
The world's favourite yellow henchbeings now serve new supervillain Sandra Bullock. Aren't you going bananas already?

### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE ROGUE NATION

By Chris McQuarrie  
The real question isn't "Who's trying to kill the what now?" but "Why the hell is Simon Pegg still here?"



### ANT-MAN

By Peyton Reed  
An ant-riding, redemption-seeking Paul Rudd with a French-bearded Michael Douglas for a mentor? At least it isn't (yet) another Spider-man.



### THE GALLOWES

By Travis Cluff & Chris Lofing  
A red room + woman strangled on camera + resurrection 20 years later = Girl all over you.



### COMEDY

CUTESY CGI

PEOPLE TALKING TOO MUCH

A MIGHTY FALL

DATE NIGHT

### HORROR

TOM CRUISE STUNTS

NEW SUPERHERO!

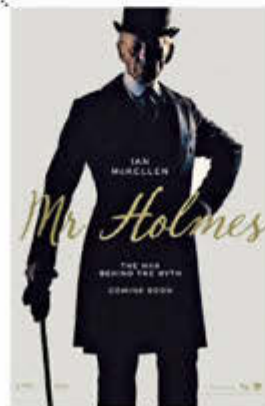
POINTLESS SEQUEL

REALITY CHECK



### IRRATIONAL MAN

By Woody Allen  
An existentialist philosophy professor falls for his student. Moral of the story: If you're suffering from writer's block, try sex with a (much) younger woman.



### MR HOLMES

By Bill Condon  
Sherlock is 93, retired and scratching his once-shrewd head over the case that did him in. And about where he put his hat. Where's that Watson when you need him?



## BOOKS



### Go Set A Watchman

By Harper Lee

The mystery of a manuscript "found" after 55 years makes this the most-awaited literary sequel of, well, all time. Not least because it follows up on a book that everyone and their grandmother read in high school. (Or pretended to, because reading was once cool.) However, there's already a shortcut for this one: Reese Witherspoon's voice on the audiobook will have you hooked. Like it did on the otherwise ho-hum *Wild*.

## MUSIC

### Boys Don't Cry

By Frank Ocean

The R&B phenom is taking a break from Tumblr and finally releasing his second studio record (as announced on, uh, Tumblr). He's being ironic with that title, though – Ocean's weepy, whispery ballads are exactly why you'll buy this album.



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# LOVE & ALGORITHMS

Comedian **Aziz Ansari** gets surprisingly serious about relationships in the Digital Age in his book **Modern Romance**, writes John Heilpern

**A**ziz Ansari, who is among the most popular stand-up comedians in the US, met me for lunch at Cherche Midi, on the Bowery, New York, looking like a hip, surprised sprite. Mr Ansari famously went from playing a delusional Lothario on *Parks And Recreation* to having 5.6 million Twitter followers and selling out Madison Square Garden twice with his one-man show. “Are you into splitsies?” he asked me.

It was a firstie. We had a hamachi crudo, followed by his choice of pan-seared salmon and steak frites to share. “Absolutely!” said the waiter. “Thank you, sir,” said Aziz.

We were meeting to discuss his first book, *Modern Romance* (for which he received a reported \$3.5 million advance), written with the sociologist Eric Klinenberg and published last month by Penguin Press. It’s an unexpectedly serious work about the challenges and pitfalls of looking for love in the Digital Age via Match.com, OkCupid, Tinder, Twitter, Facebook – the whole techno shebang.

Aziz Ansari is now 32. He isn’t, then, a bewildered fogey when it comes to understanding our hyper-connected



**Modern Romance**  
By Aziz Ansari  
Penguin Press,  
June 2015



times. But he’s old enough, he told me, to still *talk* to someone on the phone. Texting is less anxiety-ridden. (“Hey, w’sup!”) And it makes it easier to cheat, break up and snoop. He mentioned the erotic thriller *Unfaithful*, from 2002, in which poor old Richard Gere hires a private detective to snoop on his beautiful wife, Diane Lane, who’s having a wild affair with a French dude. “If they made *Unfaithful* now,” Aziz explained amusingly, “he’d just look at her smartphone and be like, ‘Who’s this guy you’re texting who’s saying, “Let’s go fuck in the stairwell

again!’?” The movie would be, like, 20 minutes!”

He believes that the most intimate relationship we have is with our cell phones. According to his research, OkCupid creates some 40,000 dates every day, while two *billion* swipes on Tinder generate 12 million matches a day. “It’s a stunning number, and I think it’s beautiful that all these tools are able to help people find love and happiness. I mean, sometimes it doesn’t go well. But there are so many people it’s helped. If you look at it one way, it’s creating all

this love in the world that wouldn't be created otherwise."

There was a time when we were buying personal ads in these things called *newspapers*. ("Attractive mid-30s male interested in travel, Chopin and mountaineering would like to meet blonde 20-year-old.") In contrast, Aziz quoted an insecure young man he interviewed complaining he had only 70 matches on Tinder, whereas an attractive female friend of his had hundreds. "Seventy women? That's insane!"

"I used to know about four women," I said.

"Yeah, me too! But now you get into this whole paradox of choice. What's weird is that all the norms are changing so fast. Is there too much choice? Just because you have 70 matches – don't try to hang out with all 70. You can hang out with a few and see if there's a connection."

EM Forster's fabled 1910 epigraph, "Only connect", has been transformed into a frantic Web search not only for relationships or marriage (or sex) but also for perfect love. Aziz, a romantic realist, sees the downside. He writes



Ansari with girlfriend Courtney McBloom

"If they made *Unfaithful* now, he'd just look at her smartphone and be like, 'Who's this guy you're texting who's saying, "Let's go fuck in the stairwell again!"?' The movie would be, like, 20 minutes!"

in *Modern Romance* that technology has turned his generation into "the rudest, flakiest people ever." "I think our cell phones have given us the tools to be rude," he explained (though he remains characteristically polite). "It's easier to send a text to split up with someone than to have a conversation and, you know, deal with the ramifications. It's easier because you're not going to hear the disappointment in their voice."

We've become souls divided, he maintains, between the real self and the cell phone self. And we get ourselves wrong! When Aziz was writing stand-up about online dating, he experimented with filling out the forms of dummy accounts on several dating sites. The person he truthfully described he wanted to find "was a little younger than me, small, with dark hair". But the woman he's been dating for the past two years and is now happily living with in Los Angeles is a little older, taller and blonde.

Match.com's own research algorithm confirms the surprising discovery that the partner people say they want online often doesn't match up to the one they're actually interested in. "Who knows who you're eliminating?" said Aziz. His current love wouldn't have made it through the filters he placed on his own online dating profile. "This is the thing," he said. "If we could have just one checkbox, it would

## POST-SCRIPT

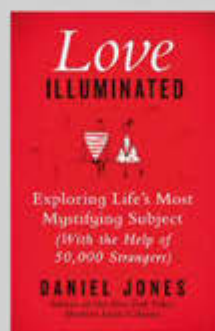
Three more books that attempt to decode the concept of love in the new millennium:



**IN REAL LIFE: LOVE, LIES & IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**  
Nev Schulman  
The host of MTV's *Catfish* lays out the rules for translating online relationships into successful ones in real life.



**INDIA IN LOVE: MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**  
Ira Trivedi  
The novelist charts relationship statuses across the country to find a sexual revolution afoot.



**LOVE ILLUMINATED: EXPLORING LIFE'S MOST MYSTIFYING SUBJECT...**  
Daniel Jones  
Jones analyzes matters of the heart through the stories he chronicles in his *NYT* column.

say, 'I want someone I have a very deep connection with and I can sit around having the most fun with – ever!'"

In the end, every dating tool is a means to a traditional outcome – a real, live, risky meeting! In fact, Aziz first met his steady girl, a pastry chef, through mutual friends before they began the texting dance between them (which he publishes in *Modern Romance*). And, as a bonus, his parents, immigrants to the US from Tamil Nadu, are the successful outcome of an arranged marriage. They were married a week after they met, some 35 years ago.

Falling in love is the eternal mystery, Aziz Ansari agrees, and, for good and bad, till death do us part, the Digital Age is here to help. 📱



# SMALL talk made slick

Can't fathom what your subordinates at the office party are blathering on about?  
GQ upgrades your conversation-starters – and it's not all about the weather

	TV Binge-Viewing	Social Media Overload	Delhi vs Mumbai	The New New Diet	"I'm So Tired"
PAST ANALOGUE	Movies	The evening news	Moving to Canada	Recreational drugs	"I'm so bored."
WHO TO ENGAGE	Anyone with a TV (or laptop or tablet or smartphone)	Your peer group	Anyone who lives in one of these two cities	Friends and family	Work colleagues
BEWARE OF	The pedant who cites Tolstoy when talking about <i>The Wire</i>	Teenagers	Anyone who lives in Kolkata	Pregnant women	Your boss
KICK-OFF COMMENT	"What shows are you watching?"	"I'm thinking of deleting my Facebook account."	"Delhi will always be Delhi, but Mumbai's changing a lot. It's not a one-industry town any more!"	"Have you seen Karan lately? He looks incredible! What do you think he did?"	"I'm so tired."
WHEN IT'S SAFE TO TUNE OUT	"We were late to <i>The Jinx</i> . My girlfriend had to catch up on <i>House Of Cards</i> , and of course she would've killed me if I'd watched <i>The Jinx</i> without her, so I decided to give <i>The Big Bang Theory</i> another chance – and it's gotten really good again! You just have to stick with it. Still, it's no <i>Empire</i> . Cookie's the best. Remember the bib scene?! BOO BOO KITTY!!!"	"I'm not really on social media. My mom used to comment on my Facebook page so I joined Twitter. Now she retweets my posts. I'm on LinkedIn – for work. I'm also on Instagram. It's a purer experience than Facebook, y'know? I'm more of a lurker, but I post now and then, so people know I still exist. Check it out: I'm up to 532 followers!"	"When you're in Delhi, you can <i>feel</i> the energy. Can't beat it for culture. But it's so stressful! I feel much healthier in Mumbai, more active. Yeah, the traffic sucks, but if you live near your work and your friends, it's the best. I hear you on the lack of seasons. But I can't deal with another Delhi winter. The last one was brutal!"	"I've tried it all – Atkins, Paleo, Weight Watchers, even the 20/20 diet. Now I'm gluten-free. It's been about a year, and I'm down two jeans sizes. Plus, I have tons more energy. It's because the wheat we eat now is making us sick! All that processing. No wonder so many of us are allergic. Don't do a juice cleanse, though. It's a scam."	"God, me too. I am soooooo tired. I've been working nonstop. I can't even remember the last time I read a book. This morning, I fell asleep in the shower – can you believe it?! Then I hit a wall in the afternoon and I really had to fight my way through it. I just have a lot going on right now. Business is booming. It's a nice problem to have, but still."
"CURVEBALL" RESPONSE WHEN SOMEONE THINKS YOU'RE NOT LISTENING	"Do you think I should cut the cord?"	"Ever heard of Yik Yak?"	"They invented Mumbai to make you miss Delhi."	"Then there's the danger of losing too much weight too fast. Loosens up the skin, and then you need to get a tuck anyway."	"You really should try green tea. It's the perfect pick-me-up."
THE FAUX PAS	"I can't keep up. It's starting to feel like work."	"Why didn't you follow me back on Twitter?"	"BKC is the HKV of Mumbai."	"I guess I was blessed with a speedy metabolism."	"All I need is four hours of sleep and I'm good to go."
THE IT'S-A-WRAP COMMENT	"NO SPOILERS."	"We should live stream this confab on Periscope!"	"What about Bengaluru, though?"	"Fuck it – I'm getting the spaghetti carbonara."	"Sorry to cut things short, but I can barely keep my eyes open. Goodnight, everyone."

# FASHION'S NIGHT OUT SEPT. 02 2015 INDIA

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## HOW **not** TO BEHAVE IN MEETINGS

Brainstorm session, conference or 'stand-up' – call it what you want, the office meeting is hell. But here are innovative ideas on how to survive one. Or not

I've a friend with a proper job, where you wear a tie, and go to an office, have a secretary, and all that sort of stuff. Given that most of my peers these days seem to work in glorified garden sheds, in their pyjamas, we all find him fascinating. It's like knowing a spaceman.

Anyway, he toddled into his workplace the other day for a meeting about formulating innovative new processes in corporate blah-de-blah, or some such. Everybody was crammed in a very small room with no chairs, and staring at a guy with a red pen.

"What's with the pen?" he said. "Shh," they all said. "No," he said. "Seriously. What's with the pen?" "You may only speak," said the guy

with the red pen, "when you have the pen." "Can I have the pen?" he said. "Shhh," they all said.

"Fine," he said, and went to the stationery cupboard, fetched another pen, brought it back in and said, "This whole pen thing is total bollocks." And then there was some shouting. Even though formulating new innovative processes in corporate blah-de-blah was literally what he'd just gone and done.

The chairs had gone a few months earlier, he said, when somebody, somewhere, had renamed "meetings" to "stand-ups". The theory here being that if you let people have chairs in meetings, then meetings last too long because people never want to leave. The real trouble came when you had to have a stand-up in a meeting room which still had chairs in it, because there wasn't ever enough space. So they started quite often having "sit-down stand-ups", and nobody ever mentioned that this was odd.

I was reading the other day (perhaps on my phone, in a meeting) that Sheryl Sandberg, who is the COO of Facebook (many meetings), veteran of both Google (even more meetings) and the US treasury (basically one big meeting that has been running since 1789), has been advising women on how they should behave in meetings. She says meetings are always dominated by men. Male executives, she's noticed, speak far more than their female counterparts. And the insinuation here is that this is because they are more confident and thus believe they have more to say.

This is a fundamental female misunderstanding of the male brain. Men aren't more confident in meetings. They're just more bored. For we are simple creatures, what else is there to do? We've tried paying attention and it hasn't worked. We've enjoyed a brief period of idle lust. We've taken apart our pens and put them back together. We've stuck a sharp key, for no reason at all, clean through the sole of our shoe. We've hummed, for a while, at the exact tone and pitch of the air conditioning, to see if anybody would notice.

And nobody has.

Then, suddenly, we've clicked back into focus.

"Hell," we've thought to ourselves. "He's still talking? It's been ages now. And he's not even telling us anything. He's just doing what people in meetings always do, which is saying the words 'going forward' and 'liaison' over and over again. And if this doesn't end soon, I shall lose my mind. Thus, I must start talking instead. It is the only way."

Still. I am fortunate. My rare meetings these days are usually brief, sensible affairs, with people quite tersely telling me to go away and do things. This, to me, is how it should be. Occasionally though, I am inexplicably sucked into long, endless meetings, full of people who have already had a pre-meeting about the meeting, and will meet after the meeting for a meeting about how the meeting went. I can't cope. I just can't. I feel my mind drifting back, always, to the worst torture of my early teenage years, which was geography lessons.

We used to get stoned on solvent during geography lessons. Everybody did. Stuck in a meeting, I start to feel as though I have still not recovered from a particularly strong hit I took in 1991; that I am perhaps sitting in the same slack-jawed daze, in the same place, in a hopeless and empty stasis inflicted by Mrs Whatserface going on and on about bloody coastal erosion. I chew pens and start to fear I have an inky beard. I lol. I swoon. I do all the things I said up above and more. "Oh god," I think. "Oh, no. Oh, please. Is this really necessary? Can't you just send me a fucking text?" ☹





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## EXEMPLARY ENGLISH CUSTOM

**Bentley's** Mulsanne Speed is stately enough for **Dave Besseling** to sit in the back and sip champagne like a duke, but sporty enough to see how close he can get to that 200mph top speed. (But maybe give that a go before hitting the champs, OK?) →





**T**here's a pub in Cheshire County, England, called the Cheshire Cat, where a grinning image of Lewis Carroll's famous feline entices motorists in for a pint or a pie. Further south down Whitchurch Road is the gate to Bolesworth Castle, which is not the *Downton Abbey* set, but pretty close.

Pick your preferred cultural reference, England is never short on such places, and there aren't many English cars better suited to cruise into either of those fantasy lands than a Bentley. Especially a big fat Mulsanne with such a squint-inducing paint job.

"It's called orange flame," says Bentley's James Barlow, talking over his shoulder from the front seat. "Go on," he encourages, "have a good fiddle back there."

And there's much to fiddle with here – automatic mesh window shades for the rear and sides, headrest consoles for the GPS, satellite radio or DVD, seatback "picnic tables" stocked with iPads, kneading massage settings in the seats, a built-in champagne chiller. "There's about £50,000 worth of extras built in," says James. And that's above the already-prohibitive £250,000 price tag. But once you've been taken through the factory in Crewe, about 40 miles south-west of all this referential English culture, these numbers start to make sense.

Run your fingers along the seams of your seat. If you're driving a Mulsanne you've purchased for yourself, you will have chosen the colour of that stitching, which is also around the headrests, the gear shift and the steering wheel. You would have chosen

#### BENTLEY MULSANNE SPEED

MAIN PAINT  
ORANGE FLAME

VENEER  
PIANO BLACK

0-60MPH  
4.9 SEC

PRICE  
APPROX  
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all this from over a million available custom colour schemes. There's a guy, on a stool, and it takes him 36 hours to sew a full Mulsanne. Add to that the five hours it takes for another person who's already had a year's practice to stretch and stitch the leather around the steering wheel.

When you step onto the factory floor of the Mulsanne line and stroll around the stations required to go from naked chassis to full Bentley and see the custom wood and leather you've chosen for your interiors pre-installation, no matter what the hues, they'll pop in contrast to the factory's clinical whiteness. It's like a hospital, or Willy Wonka's TV studio. Not that they'll let you film anything in there.

There's a whole separate section in another building where the 14 European bull hides needed to upholster each Mulsanne are treated, ensuring you'll have that "new car smell" times a thousand long after the car gets old. Across another alley on site, there's over £30,000 worth of veneers in the woodshop's storage vault at any given time, and a team of apprentices nearby are hard at training to perfect those signature paper-thin inlays for the dashboard and the door panels. That part of the factory smells like what you'd imagine as paradise for Queen Elizabeth's baby gryphon, the one she keeps in the basement of Buckingham Palace - or just anyone who likes the smell of wood.

Because this is all Bentley's deal: customizing everything. The leather and the wood. And they like metal.





## THE BENTLEY MULSANNE IS THE QUINTESSENCE OF STATELY BRITISH FANTASY

gone down about 20 per cent by the time we circle back towards Crewe. Not that fuel economy is likely to be a deal-breaker for anyone looking to buy one of these monsters.

We've been driving for about 90 minutes when we pull back in front of the factory, where "a Mulsanne is completed every 86 minutes," says Nick Still, Mulsanne production manager. Which means there's a chance a shiny new Bentley may have just come off the assembly line, been quality checked inside and out, and run through "the Monsoon room" for leaks. There's only a ten per cent chance it'll stay in the UK – about 85 per cent of Bentley's business is overseas, mainly the US and China. And though India isn't much of that last five per cent, I joke, "You know, Nick, you could always just send me one in Mumbai if you want some real monsoon testing."

Nick laughs with enough incredulity that I ditch even my comparably moderate second idea, which is to ask if we can at least swing back to the gates of Bolesworth Castle, just to see, when we showed up in our orange Bentley, if we could gain passage up to the main house. If any car could be a free pass to a listed estate... And if not, we could at least play Mad Hatter at the Cheshire Cat pub for a while to make up for it. Or we could always just load up the Mulsanne's champagne cooler and see where we end up when the stocks need to be refilled. Any of those outings would make for some exemplary English custom. ☺



A lot. "You see this bit here?" – the Mulsanne's lead interior designer, George Bowen, had pointed out earlier in the day – "right there beside the gearshift? Feel how cold it is." No el cheapo plastic for these guys. (Well, there is one plastic part but George said he's working on being able to produce it in glass and maintain quality so let's let him try and take care of that before we call anyone out on it.) Almost as an aside, George explained that when you're in the driver's seat, your downward line of sight is not flush to the door panels, so he moved them down 2 millimetres to keep the driver's sightlines continuous. "Can you see the difference?" he asked. I wasn't quite sure I could, but I wasn't going to argue with the guy who took three months to get the curve in the dashboard right. "It might be a bit of an OCD thing," he joked.

**D**o you want to drive now?" asks James, just as I've begun thinking of ways I could survive without ever leaving this back seat. I feel like we should at least figure out where the closest off-licence would be to get some bubbly into its compartment. This is the quintessence of stately British fantasy here, being languidly chauffeured around the countryside, because when you're in the back seat of one of these, you shouldn't have to move too fast for anyone. My fantasy would have included a man named Jeeves, not James, but I'm not complaining.



And also, we should be clear, this is not only a Mulsanne but a Mulsanne Speed, which means you can move from cruising lord to drag racer in the time it takes to switch to the driver's seat. Once you're up there, you're looking at 0 to 60mph in 4.9 seconds. If you wish to accomplish this feat on Cheshire's curvy lanes, five seconds is about the time before you'll be testing the sports car handling on this tank-like sedan, and likely nodding in approval. If you've got a decent straightaway, the Mulsanne's V8 6.75-litre engine will propel you to a top speed of 200mph. And with all this weight capable of travelling at such speeds on our good 60-mile tear, the gas gauge has only





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**> PUNCTUALITY IS NOT POLITE, IT'S CRUCIAL**

Your host will have booked a slot, and delays cost by the minute. Keep the plane waiting on the tarmac and you can forget a second invitation.

**> BEHAVE AS YOU WOULD ON A YACHT**

Which is to say, do not mess up the interior. Chances are it's bespoke, so damage will prove excruciatingly expensive to fix.

**> HERE'S A TIP: DON'T**

The pilot is a salaried aviator. But do buy your host a thank-you gift.

**> SOCIAL FAUX PAS**

Tweeting pictures of the people on board - just, no.

**> KNOW WHO'S IN CHARGE**

You are entirely beholden to your host. Let him pick his seat first, as he'll have a favourite. If he wants to sleep, be quiet. If he wants to drink, drink with him.

**> DRESS THE PART**

If it isn't a business trip, cocoon yourself in the accepted high-net-worth travel uniform: dress sneakers, soft jeans, polo and a cashmere zip-up jumper with a hood.

**> A WORD ABOUT BAGS**

Bring soft luggage only; if the hold fills up it will be stashed in the washroom.

**> CHECK YOURSELF**

Don't go all airline geek and start talking about FAs - they're air hostesses. It is, however, perfectly okay to say "wheels-up" rather than "takeoff".

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# WALL STREET SHUFFLE

In 2007, **Rupert Murdoch** gobbled up another of the world's great newspapers and, with great relish, the new wolf of the **Wall Street Journal** began to reshape it in his image. But the old broadsheet bit back and now – somehow, against all odds – it remains a unique bastion of defiance at the heart of the News Corp empire

Written by **MICHAEL WOLFF**

**T**he purchase of the *Wall Street Journal* may not turn out to be the capstone of Rupert Murdoch's career, as he himself thought and hoped it would be, but it is becoming an ever more curious chapter. After seven years, the paper has managed both to accommodate Murdoch and defy him at

the same time.

In a way, it's a reminder of the inherent strengths of quality news organizations and their cultural values (though this is not necessarily such a positive attribute).

Murdoch began his bid for Dow Jones, the *Journal's* parent, in March 2007. It was a complex, long-shot, divide-and-conquer battle, of the kind that Murdoch is very good at and for which most other businessmen have little patience. The objections to Murdoch, from the paper's managers, its controlling shareholders – the multi-generational Bancroft family – and liberal society in general, were fierce and unrelenting. Murdoch was a certain destroyer of quality journalism. Not only was he a vulgarian, quite probably unable to even recognize quality, but – contrary to every tenet of the 125-year-history of the *Journal* – he regarded the very point of journalism to reside in the power it afforded him to grow his own influence and fortune.

While Murdoch was trying to mollify his critics, asking why he would want to buy something to destroy it, he was privately derisive about the *Journal's* methods, culture and style. He was barely able to contain himself about all the changes he would make. I doubt he saw himself as leading anything less than an overthrow. Not only was the *Journal*, to him, ponderous and pretentious, but it represented the haughtiness and snobbery which he'd had to overcome throughout his entire career – indeed, much of the point of his career has been about destroying such haughtiness and snobbery.

Arriving in the newsroom on the day the deal was finally done, after months of war, in December 2007, he began to publicly sideline the paper's ranking editor, Marcus Brauchli, whom he had agreed not to fire, but whom he would force out anyway shortly afterwards. (To circumvent his agreement to keep Brauchli as the top editor, he installed the then-*Times* editor Robert Thomson as publisher, but gave him all the top editorial responsibilities.)

Not long after, he held his first get-together with the *Journal's* managers and brought along Col Allan, the profane, scabrous, Australian tabloid editor who runs the *New York Post*. And then, in short order, he moved the paper from its historic position in the Financial District uptown to News Corporation's headquarters, cheek-by-jowl with the *New York Post* and Fox News.

Eight years later, almost all the paper's management has been thoroughly Murdochized, much of the culture upended and the paper's fundamental brand and purpose realigned. And yet it remains not just recognizable but fundamentally set in its ways, ever cautious in its reporting, bureaucratic in its systems, slow in its response, and in some deep, core sense wholly resistant to change. It is a reasonable daily question: the true point of Murdoch's long and hugely expensive – \$5.6 billion – battle for the paper... What was it again?

**M**urdoch's model for his assault on the *Journal* was his transformative takeover, in 1981, of the *Times*. As with the *Times*, having agreed to a series of contractual restraints on his behaviour he would remake the paper through his own force of will and the zeal of his loyal managers. His plan was to make life difficult, or impossible, for anyone less than wholly loyal. "We'll just have to fire a lot of people," he said, not without some relish, as he made his plans. In this way, he would turn the paper's importance to his own uses, while remaking it in his image.

Along with Thomson, Les Hinton, who had been the executive chairman of News International in the UK and a Murdoch lieutenant for almost his entire career, came to run Dow Jones. Most of all, Murdoch himself would devote the bulk of his daily time to the *Journal*. Within a year, most of the *Journal's* top old regime managers were gone. When Hinton took the fall for the hacking issues in London and resigned from the company, Murdoch tried an outsider, Lex Fenwick from Bloomberg. When that proved less than smooth – as outsiders in the Murdoch world often find – he dispatched Fenwick and brought in Will Lewis, who had come over from News International for a New York position. (Lewis had been a





long-time *Telegraph* editor and executive, but having fallen out with the *Telegraph* found a happy fit with Murdoch.) When Thomson stepped up to become chief executive of the entire Murdoch newspaper company (spun off from Murdoch's entertainment assets, 21st Century Fox, as a result of the hacking scandal), Gerry Baker, who had worked under Thomson at the *Times*, became the *Journal's* top editor.

Much of the inner circle of Murdoch managers at the *Journal* was suddenly not American. Murdoch was importing Murdoch talent and, with the *Post* his only other paper in the US, much of it came from London.

There was, too, a seismic staff change – a class upheaval. Like the *New York Times*, the *Journal* had always had singular, best-of-breed hiring standards. The route to the *Journal* was through certain colleges and universities and other top-tier journalism institutions – just the kind of exclusionary policies that Murdoch had always hated. Murdoch liked to hire people who were or would become Murdoch people, not people who might feel they had some independent standing and a passport to go anywhere they wanted to.

Strikingly, some new hires at the *Journal* came from the *Post* (causing friction with Col Allan), a background that would have been near anathema at the old *Journal*. (This, not incidentally, had the effect of lowering salaries. *Journal* pay standards, if not journalism standards, now became closer to the *Post's*.)

All this created a significant disruption, or rupture, even a kind of class warfare in the newsroom – mostly, no surprise, with Murdoch winning. A steady stream of *Journal* grandees departed the paper, rather to Murdoch's delight.

Perhaps the most notable battle was with Walt Mossberg and Kara Swisher. Mossberg, the *Journal's* influential gadget columnist, and Swisher, a former tech business columnist, had, under the old regime, launched a profitable and influential conference, the D Conference, and website, allthingsd.com. And then, with Murdoch in post-hacking disgrace, they decided not to invite him. Vowing his revenge, he eventually ejected the team from the company – no matter that he lost a valuable franchise and, after Mossberg and Swisher set up a new company, created a competitor. It was *his* paper.



And not least of all, he changed the focus of the *Journal*. In a substantial revision of the brand, it went from being the world's leading business paper to a general interest paper with good business coverage. It was doing what Murdoch wanted, competing with the *New York Times*, arguably besting it in its international coverage, its business reporting, even in the local New York City coverage it had added, and, to boot, in its quite un-Murdoch-like book coverage.

And yet at the same time, even with new captains, much new staff, an apparent new culture and new brand positioning, the paper somehow continued to ignore Murdoch in meaningful ways, as nobody ever had. It spoke its own language, one that even Murdoch managers seemed not to hear or be able to comprehend.

Before he bought it, Murdoch had two overriding criticisms of the *Journal*: it was dull and it was slow. He would stab at the physical paper, pointing out examples of long-winded, mushy, tepid and timid stories. Its slowness, often lagging the *New York Times* (not to mention the internet), and general lack of urgency he blamed on its laborious editing and production bureaucracy. "Eleven editors, eleven editors, that's what a single story goes through," he would repeat to anyone who'd listen. (In fact, eleven was sometimes seven or nine, but his message was clear.) That was what he said he would bring to the paper, boldness and speed.

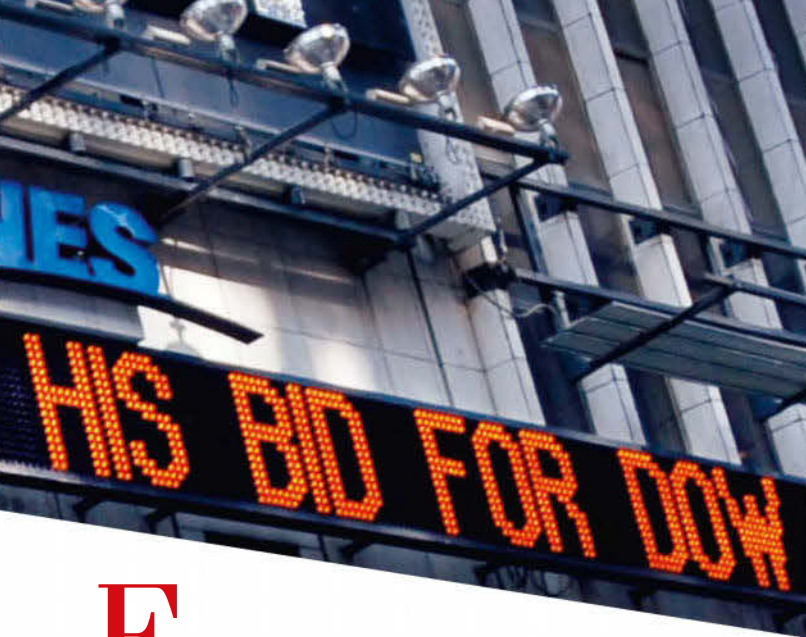
And yet, seven years in, the two things that most continued to characterize the paper, even amid good and thorough reporting, were that it was boring and slow.

The accusation that Murdoch was bound to destroy the fundamental ethos of the power turned out to be quite wrong. The real nature of the ethos – part of what produced consistently reliable, if unexciting, journalism – was incredible caution, layers of editing, endless second guessing and a bureaucracy that restrained errant as well as distinctive voices. So strong was its instinct for institutional control that it somehow managed to override Murdoch's style and impulses – for the risky, the streamlined, and for decisions made, for better or worse, in the heat of the moment.

Everything had changed at the *Journal*, and yet everything somehow remained the same. It wasn't really a Murdoch paper at all. It remained stuck in time, a more innocent and process-conscious time. It was a grand (and grinding) newsroom, with desks inside of desks, with the old guys supervising the new, with an almost fetishistic emphasis on the careful reporting of utterly boring news. The ultimate irony here is that this system has been supported and maintained by Murdoch money. The massive Murdoch investment – by some estimates as much as \$1 billion covering losses and upgrades, on top of the billions paid for the company – maintained an infrastructure which maintains not just standards but status quo.

The cowboy atmosphere famous at Murdoch papers, the sense of cut-throat competition that Murdoch papers encourage (and that, arguably, was responsible for the hacking scandal), does not, in any real fashion, exist at the *Journal*. And, with the influx of younger (cheaper) reporters from diverse backgrounds, this





# Even with new captains, new staff and an apparent new culture, the *Journal* continued to ignore Murdoch



arguably makes the place, save only for its regular pay cheque, one of the unhappiest or depressed places in journalism. And a confusing one too. If you have to work for Murdoch, don't you at least get to walk a bit out on the edge?

Rather, the culture at the *Journal* – one that many generations of *Journal* reporters grew up in without knowing any other – is top-down, rule-based, instructional and fogeyish to a fault. Very little that is surprising, clever, novel or, certainly, viral, gets through its filter, including any Murdoch flare or Murdoch baseness.

Nobody is really making news at the *Journal*; nobody is out in front. That impulse is firmly discouraged. The *Journal* carefully chews as it has always done, producing a well-digested product.

While Murdoch has not been able to much change the great middle bureaucracy and culture of the *Journal*, he has been able to change the top. This creates a sense, not a happy one in any management book, of Murdoch's boys, the insiders, versus everyone else. This too has the effect of reinforcing the status quo, because the people who could change it are so removed from it that they come to think it has already changed. In a two-tier world, the top is having fun, even if, confoundingly the paper is still, somehow, so immovably dull.

Its greatest failure, though, involves the one thing that Murdoch wanted most of all. His dream for the *Journal* was to create the ultimate international news organization; not just to take on the *Financial Times* (though certainly to do that too) but to bring the world an international business voice that would dominate finance and government and reflect nothing so much as his own. When he bought the *Journal*, its once vaunted international expansion had shrunk to a kind of child's version of the paper, a few flimsy sheets available in a few hotels. Part of his pitch to the Bancroft family, a rallying cry really, was that he would be able to realize the *Journal's* international destiny.

Alas, abroad, it is still not more than its pitiable version. It may ably cover the rest of the world for Americans, but it has hardly become an international presence. The *FT* continues in that role; even the *Guardian*, with its anti-Murdoch raison d'être, has taken

a large piece of the international high ground. Murdoch and the *Journal*, a match that might have seemed destined for international dominance, missed this boat.

The nagging and perhaps fitting circumstance is that Murdoch bought the *Wall Street Journal* pretty much at the final moment when anybody would pay full value for a newspaper. In that sense, the sale of the *Journal* represents the newspaper business' last proud moment. After that (less than a year after he finalized the deal, Lehman Brothers collapsed), there would only be the deluge.

And yet, the *Journal*, as though in an entirely parallel world, has hardly been affected by it. Many other papers in the US have either been in bankruptcy or have had vast staff reductions. All other Murdoch papers around the world live in doubt – but Murdoch, with great resolve and apparently no regrets, funds the *Journal's* losses (they've gone as high as \$100 million a year, but are now said to be under \$50 million). Even the *New York Times* tips in and out of extremis, its future wholly unclear. Indeed, the *Journal* can often seem like the only island left – for journalists, a kind of pay cheque island. Oddly, or absurdly, its staff even grows. But there seems, at this point, very little sense on anybody's part that this is an opportunity, a place to invent the new news. That may require asking too many questions about the nature of the future. Stasis is better for all.

Murdoch himself may not want to rock the boat too much either. He owns the last real newspaper, after all.

So leave it alone. ☹





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# Lisa Ray

## THE PIN-UP'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

That's right, fella. Lisa Ray is 43, the cancer that didn't kill her is still incurable and she's "on some pretty heavy medication". But look at her. Just look at her. How, I beseech you, is this possible?

Photographed by  
FARROKH CHOTHIA

Styled by  
VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ

Written by  
DAVE BESSELING

BONDAGE DRESS  
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It's not to say that watching Lisa Ray smooth her sheer-stockinged thighs over one another as she leans into the curve of a vintage sofa isn't alluring. It's not to say that when she looks

past the camera lens for a moment, lips in full pout and hair corkscrewing over her shoulders, something doesn't start insisting it's being imprisoned against its will. I'd be off my rusty rocking-horse to fill the world with such lies.

What should be said here is that, despite being the closest thing India's ever had to a pin-up girl – she still gets called out for that *Gladrags* cover she did over 20 years ago – and having been formed by uniting the holy sacraments of miscegenation – Polish, Punjabi – and deracination – raised in Toronto, moved to Bombay in the Nineties and now has one foot here and one in Hong Kong – she's actually a fun, easy person to talk to.

And if you didn't know, you'd never guess she'd had cancer. But far from a charity case, Lisa says she's "grateful, because a lot of people never experience that crisis that shocks you into a clear way of seeing, letting go of all the stuff that's not a part of you and that you don't need." Far from any reticence, "I'm sort of an open book," she laughs, talking about the manuscript of her forthcoming memoir, which will detail, among other things, her ongoing tussle with multiple myeloma. "This type of cancer is incurable," she says, "people don't realize I go once a month for blood tests and I'm still on some pretty heavy medication."

"Would you have come to this clear way of seeing without the cancer diagnosis," I ask, "without having experienced that kind of accelerated catharsis?"

"There's a side of me that's always been a seeker," she explains, "an introvert that needs to go off to caves and mountains and things like that, but nothing less than a diagnosis of cancer would have provoked me into making the changes that I had to make."

I'm still doing that thing your brain does when you meet someone you've only seen on TV or in magazines before. She may look all lithe and leggy in her fashion spreads, but in real life Lisa pads around like a loveable, sun-kissed, olive-skinned Smurf, smiling at goddamn everything. (Why can't I be more like that?)

Sitting on a dressing-room stool in ligature-thin lingerie and sipping a Starbucks, she free-associates the last words of people's sentences, and later while discussing preferred meditation techniques, in a similar vein, she manages to recast a verb's past-perfect tense: "I've definitely dabbled, you know? Explored deep down. Deep, umm, doven. Doven? Is that a word? 'Dive, dived, dove'" – eyes circling like a ruminative Betty Boop – "Deep doven. Really?" She pauses. Lets it settle. "Yeah," she decides. "I like it."

Doven it is.



And this is her power: she somehow doesn't sound like a harem-pant patchouli quester when she talks about TM or Vipassana, nor does she sound like she's high when describing her Rocky Mountain getaway in beautiful British Columbia as such: "Nelson is just that magical cookie, you know? Very high energy." Even if she started talking about crystal healing and the colours of auras, thetans and orgone counts, or how she has a "gift" and knows that in a past life I was the Scottish woman who really invented golf, I don't know if I'd be less attentive.

"But your spiritual pursuit doesn't mean you should deny life," she says, "I'm beyond hunkering down like I used to in these really basic retreats. No, no, no, I want to be comfortable... But it's this dualistic mind that says 'Hang on a sec! You've gotta...'"

"Do one or the other," I suggest.

"Yeah," she nods, "and that's all bullshit."

"Why deny what's available, eh?"

"Yeah! Five-star ashrams!"

"How would one combine glamping and ashrams," I think aloud, trying to beat her at her own word games. "Glashrams?"

"Glashrams!" she laughs. "Nice. I like that. Why not?"

With Lisa, somehow, none of this is contradictory.

"I think at some point we have to transcend our labels, and that's been my journey. What do you call an Indo-Polish-Canadian ex-Mumbaikar? It's ridiculous."

"Post-global something something..."

"They do talk about it right?" she says. "Post-post-racial identities? The next super-race?"

Dare we contemplate a future race of übermenschen where all the überfrauen look like her? Mustn't think about that right now.

"For a long time identity was an issue in my life," she says, "but I kind of chuckle to myself now when people talk about me having this global identity..."

I like the idea that we're all eventually just going to fuck ourselves into a nice shade of brown anyway, but aside from being some exemplary global citizen, Lisa does have wisdom to impart for young women doing what she did over 20 years ago, coming to Bombay to see their faces on billboards by any means necessary.

"There's so much pressure to nip and tuck and wear the right thing, say the right thing," she says, crossing off a mental checklist with flicks of her eyes. "And get the injections. And squeeze yourself into something you're not. It's not worth it; I wish I could put it more eloquently... Well here's one thing that I do say: that I'm more beautiful for having been broken, you know? Wear your scars... Go inwards before you go outwards. And you know what? Fuck them. Know who you are first." 🍷






*Go inward before  
you go outward'*



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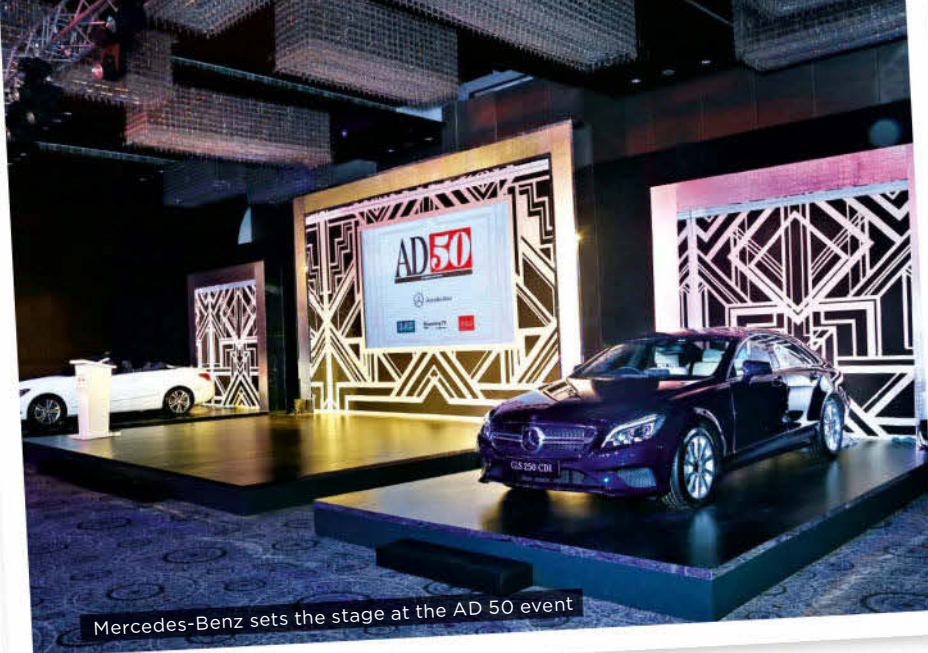
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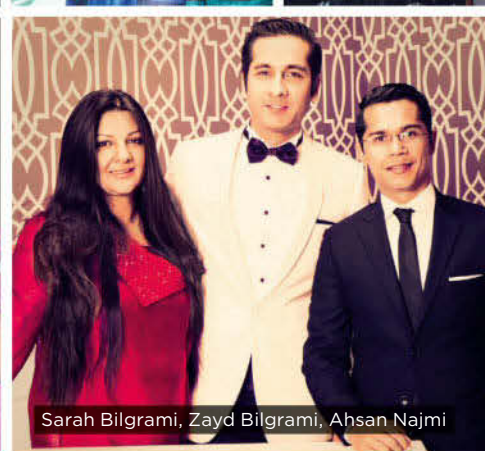


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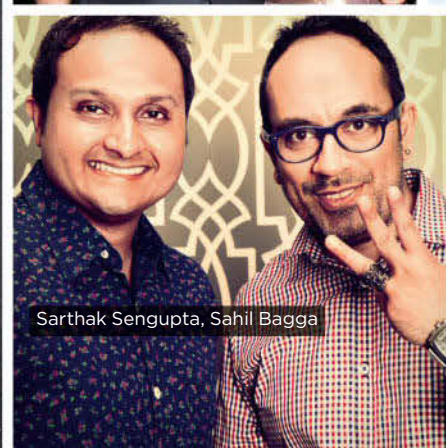
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The Asian Paints booth



Siddharth Talwar (seated) and Ankur Choksi (second from right) with the team from AD 50 firm Studio Lotus



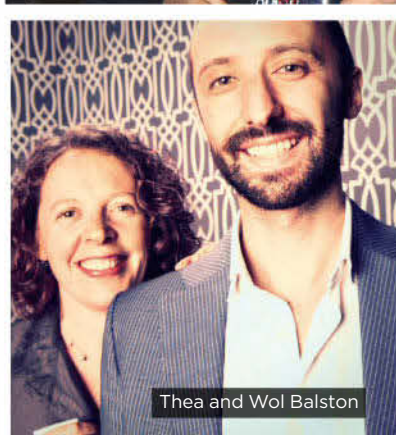
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# I AIN'T NO JOKE MAN

Four years after being dismissed as a novelty rapper, **Himanshu Suri** has gone from hitting it big, hitting rock bottom and moving back in with his parents, only to re-emerge as one of hip-hop's most outspoken social critics

WRITTEN BY **ADAM MATTHEWS** PHOTOGRAPHED BY **JOCELYN BAUN**

**F**or the cognoscenti, the Lower Manhattan intersection of Great Jones Street and Bowery is hallowed ground. In 1983, Andy Warhol rented a loft space at 57 Great Jones to the Haitian-Puerto Rican pop artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, whose short career would take him from spray-painting subway cars to being canonized for artwork like "Irony Of Negro Policeman". For five years, the brilliant, tortured Basquiat worked and lived in the loft as he sunk deeper into paranoia and drug addiction. Finally, in 1988, Basquiat was found dead in his bath, a collection of bloody syringes crowning the ledge of the tub. He was 27 years old.

In 2015, the front of 57 Great Jones hosts a Japanese butchery that displays fine cuts of Wagyu beef like diamonds, and in the back there's an unmarked, cooler-than-thou restaurant called Bohemian. On a blisteringly cold winter day, three trailers and various barriers manned by movie-crew types block the entrance to Number 57. The production leads to a line of young black men in tight pants and greying-at-the-wings white guys, all waiting for clipboard-toting PR chicks to admit them into a Nike Pop-Up Store.

As these hype-beasts vie for ostensibly rare yet mass-produced sneakers, it's heartening that Himanshu Suri seems completely uninterested in entering Phil Knight's church of consumption. Instead, "Heems", best known as

one-third of Noughties rap group Das Racist, mugs for pics out front of the Great Jones Street Cafe, right across the road from where Basquiat worked and died.

It's not a coincidence we're shooting here. Himanshu draws several parallels between himself and Basquiat. "New York person of colour takes art world by storm, influenced by the streets and graffiti," explains Heems. "Eventually, he can't take it and dies. Cautionary tale for people like me who put all of themselves into their work."

57 Great Jones is also just a block away from the Aicon Gallery, where as part of the lead-up to his first full-length solo album, *Eat Pray Thug*, Heems curated an art show of the same name, featuring desi artists like Ratna Gupta, Ranbir Kaleka and Abdullah MI Syed – as well as art he created in partnership with Chiraag Bhakta, aka Pardon My Hindi. As in his music, Heems' visual art references borrow heavily from his north Indian family's experience in the United States.

But before you scoff at the self-described "chubby guy from that Das Racist fad" trying to summon a legendary person-of-colour on home turf, listen to "New York City Cops" off 2012's *Nehru Jackets*, Heems' debut solo mixtape. Its lyrical palette is as charged as any Basquiat canvas. In contrast to NWA's defiant, in-your-face classic "Fuck Tha Police", Heems seems resigned to police brutality, tediously listing off every time the NYPD has killed an unarmed black









**B**

or Hispanic man over the last four decades. Similarly laborious repetition appears on the 11-track *Eat Pray Thug*, released this March, where the listener – of whatever skin colour – can feel trapped in Heems' head, especially as he confronts, more than once, the moment where his otherness became inescapable.

Heems attended Stuyvesant High School, one of three elite New York City public high schools that require students to pass an entrance exam. And though Stuyvesant marked the beginning of a scholastic career most Indian parents would dream of for their kids, something terrible happened very early in his second year. On September 11, 2001, Himanshu Suri, Vice President of the student council, watched from less than a kilometre away as American Airlines Flight 11 hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46am. Seventeen minutes later, United Flight 175 hit the South Tower.

When he speaks about it, Heems' voice quivers. "As a 15-year-old," he tells me, "I basically saw people jumping and it really messed with my head. We were close enough to hear people hitting the ground. Even now it triggers a lot of anxiety for me."

The spoken-word conclusion of *Eat Pray Thug*'s "Flag Shopping" describes how: *from then on they called all of us Osama, the old Sikh men on the bus were Osama. I was Osama, we were Osama... are you Osama?*

"I feel like on my last couple records I made a habit of hiding behind humour or my Indian identity or Indian samples, and on this record it's all out in the open," says Heems. (That and the fact that his label didn't clear the Indian samples meant to appear on the album.) "I'm talking about collateral damage from the war on terror, language barriers and mental health in communities of colour... I'm at a place in my career where I want to say these things."

Heems' unfiltered Twitter feed often touches on similarly unsettling subject matter. And in tweets like, "my album's about me trying not to die and also be a voice for my peoples", Basquiat's tragic spectre doesn't hover too far away.

Yet when I ask Heems if it's hard to be so sensitive in such a mean business, he doesn't miss a beat. His humour, his armour, quickly reappears.

"Who told you I'm sensitive?" he laughs.

becoming a rap star was never the goal. In late 2008, after graduating from Wesleyan University, a prestigious liberal arts college in Connecticut,

Heems was working as a recruiter on Wall Street and living with classmate Victor "Kool AD" Vazquez in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. But then their band Das Racist's song "Combination Pizza Hut And Taco Bell" suddenly took off. It was both infectiously catchy, and by simply repeating the song title with a few variations in syntax, it became an artistic statement on the ubiquitousness of American fast-food chains. The pair soon added hypeman Ashok "Dapwell" Kondabolu to the line-up for comic relief, and by the end of 2011 Das Racist had gone from playing free shows to appearing on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* and gracing the cover of *Spin*. In the *Spin* story, written by comedian Hari Kondabolu – Dapwell's brother – readers learn of how surprised Hari was that his little brother's band, which he didn't take all that seriously, had actually "made it".

Das Racist planned much of this comedic offensive about four blocks from Aicon Gallery, at Minca Ramen, Heems' favourite Japanese Noodle Bar. And it's here, over steaming bowls of spicy ramen, that Heems reflects on his whirlwind sweep into fame. "It was cool because I got to travel," he says, seated at a tightly packed five-top with me and three prep-schoolers. "It was like a vacation from Mama and Papa at the end of college."

In Das Racist, Heems and Kool AD enjoyed baiting their listeners, challenging them to figure out whether they were joking or not. But if you listen really closely to songs like "Fake Patois", where they recount how many Nineties rappers affected really bad Jamaican accents, it's actually a love letter to hip-hop, written by guys close enough to the culture to take the piss out of it.

Heems remains frustrated that listeners didn't get that. He averages what seems like one retweet per day where he mocks fans who breathlessly tell him that they hate hip-hop but love his work. "[Hip-hop] is my favorite genre," he says, sounding exasperated. "How am I am supposed to respond to that?"

But Heems also felt limited by Das Racist's reliance on satire. And underneath the non-stop bacchanal that Dap and Heems



# “MY ALBUM’S ABOUT ME TRYING NOT TO DIE AND ALSO BE A VOICE FOR MY PEOPLES”

chronicle on their web series *Chillin’ Island*, the guys weren’t getting along.

On December 3, 2012, the band was scheduled to play a festival in Munich, Germany, but only Heems appeared on stage. “You guys wanna know a secret?” said Heems, smiling wryly to the crowd. “Alright, so I’m going to do some Das Racist songs, but Das Racist is breaking up and we’re not a band anymore.”

Kool AD struck back on Twitter: “for the record i quit das racist 2 months ago and was asked by our manager not to announce it yet. apparently @himanshu wanted to do it tho”.

Their major-label debut was shelved. And just like that the never-ending party was over. “I was bummed when we actually broke up because it was a way to make money really easily,” Dapwell memorably told *Spin*. “I probably won’t be able to make money that easily ever again.”

More than two years later, slurping ramen and drinking saké at Das Racist’s old de facto HQ, Heems isn’t anxious to revisit the break-up. The band’s implosion, followed by two years of Asian touring – including the stint in India that birthed the sarcastic nod to Elizabeth Gilbert’s best-selling book, *Eat Pray Love* – left Heems “feeling dead inside”, he’s said.

“Do you still talk to the guys from the band?” I ask, nosing the pork-infused steam rising out of my bowl.

“I talk to Dap and Dap talks to Victor,” he says languidly, almost nodding off at the table. “I mean we might shoot each other an email here or there occasionally, but we’re not like...” He trails off, and snaps back to attention a few seconds later: “Dude, I love this dinner. They did not skimp on the pimp.”

Heems leans back against the wall, crossing his arms in a red varsity jacket, one of three looks he picked for his photo shoot across from where Basquiat took his last hit. He looks dazed, or incredibly exhausted.

“Why is it hard for you and Victor to get along?” I ask.

“It’s not hard,” he says. “We just don’t get along. He doesn’t get along with me. He doesn’t like me. I don’t know. Off the camera I’ll be like ‘what up bro, how you been?’”

“You ever feel like young men in their 20s are destined to fight these battles?”

“Yeah, I mean I am almost 30 so that was one of the main factors for me [to get focused about my life]. I mean it’s not often that I get to curate a room,” he says, jumping to the *Eat Pray Thug* exhibition, “let alone one in Manhattan.” Then he gets up. “Let me use the bathroom. Excuse me for one moment.”

When he comes back after a few minutes, I attempt to revisit the Das Racist break-up, but he shuts me down.

“Wow,” he says, almost inaudibly. And a minute later, “So what’s up, Adam?... Is that the angle you want? Like what happened with our band?”

We sit and trade uncomfortable non-sequiturs for a couple more minutes. “I got to use the restroom,” he says, excusing himself again.

“Such – good – ra – men,” he muses, to no one in particular, on his way back to the toilets.



**“I’m so New York I live with my mama.  
Had to leave Williamsburg and all that white drama”  
—“So NY”, *Eat Pray Thug***

Girish and Veena Suri came to New York City in 1980. Like many South Asians, they landed in one of New York’s most diverse boroughs, Queens; in Flushing, its most diverse neighbourhood. Despite earning her Masters degree in Economics in India, Veena took work as a cashier at a local grocery chain, making just four dollars an hour. Girish found a job as a clerk. On the side, he drove a cab. That year Veena gave birth to their daughter, Shivani, and five years later baby Himanshu arrived.

To see how far the Suris have come in the past three-and-a-half decades, I ride the Long Island Railroad to the Hicksville station, past the Queens neighborhoods of Glen Oaks, where the family bought their first apartment, and Bellerose, where they owned their own detached home. About 20 minutes later, I can tell I have arrived when four middle-aged men conversing in Hindi stand up and get off the train, where outside the station waits a white Lexus with the vanity plate “HIMANSHU”.

Heems immediately seems more relaxed, more friendly – more awake – here than he was at the ramen shop in Lower Manhattan a couple of weeks ago. After stopping for an hour at Apna Bazaar, a desi supermarket near at least five dosa hawkers, we drive five



minutes to a huge, two-storey brick home with massive white columns out front. The inside is decorated in what Heems proudly calls “Punjabi Greco”, a style that screams new money. Around here, pics of Heems are less pouty Williamsburg hipster, more chubby-cheeked *chhotu bhaiya* in bedazzled wedding suits. At home in Long Island, the self-destructive artist is invisible. Here, Heems is both mama’s boy and doting uncle to Zoe, his sister Shivani’s two-year-old, who greets him by jumping into his arms and yelling “Manchu!”

Heems and Zoe are close. When he’s home, there is dance time, yoga time and future plans for a thorough grounding in arts and culture. And it’s easy to see why Heems moved back in with his parents after he came back from India, where he recorded *Eat Pray Thug* over three days at Bandra’s Purple Haze studio with engineer Gaurav Gupta. In Mumbai there was much notorious partying and debauch, but as we sit around the Suri’s kitchen table, it’s all about Veena’s chicken kheema, shammi kebabs and the freshest dhaniya chutney this side of South Delhi. When we finish, she packs some for my wife and gives me a hug goodbye.

Himanshu’s life here provides something crucial: set boundaries, something he’s long struggled with. But this polarity is also typical Himanshu. He even jokes about being bi-polar on Twitter, and says he plans to move back to Mumbai later this year. “I can live in New York but I don’t feel I can thrive in New York”, he tweets. But with Heems, you never know if he’s being serious about any of it.

**A**s we drive half an hour from his parents’ home in Long Island to the old haunts of his Das Racist glory days in Brooklyn, he asks how much time I will need, and I say “However long I can be around so I have a sense of who you are.”

“What if I’m like ‘Adam I’m done?’” he says, laughing, “Then I am a dick!”

If you read or watch other interviews with Himanshu, it’s apparent that he knows much of his appeal derives from the tension between oversharing and then throwing up walls again. By now we’ve crossed the boundary between textbook desi life in Long Island and the party life in Williamsburg, a kind of theme park for young adults – just imagine the Hindutva fun police’s worst nightmare. The neighbourhood also attracts a particularly virulent breed of bearded, tattooed, skinny-jeans newcomer. And while Heems says these are the douchebags who drove him out of here, I’m kind of wondering if, in this milieu, he’s more than a little like them. What other neighbourhood in New York, or the world, could have launched the ironic, maybe-joking maybe-not ethos of Das Racist?

“I’m the Mayor out here,” Heems says proudly, as we pull up in front of the first of three bars we’ll visit that evening. It’s garden-variety Williamsburg, complete with the edit staff of *Complex* magazine holding down a table up front. Heems is composed, confident and nice to people.

After half an hour we leave the bar and walk two blocks to the ATM, where Heems sees a man passed out. While withdrawing money, Heems notices the man’s US Army-issued boots and speaks to him. He’s a Polish immigrant who has struggled with PTSD since returning from Afghanistan. Heems asks the man whether he’d shot anyone or seen people killed. Then he worries that he asked too many questions.



## HIS APPEAL DERIVES FROM THE TENSION BETWEEN OVERSHARING AND THEN THROWING UP WALLS AGAIN

This is also essential Heems: being smart, then smart-ass, then feeling guilty. Going through the motions with him is like living through one of his tracks.

When we try to hit a cool-guy club for his former manager’s birthday party, the bouncer tells us calmly that the club is full, but Heems doesn’t pull the whole “don’t you know who I am?” routine. “I like the way he spoke to us,” he explains as we walk. “He could have been a dick.”

Instead, we head to a far more humble abode where his friend Allyson is deejaying. The bar, which abuts the McDonald’s parking lot, is one of the last remaining real dive bars in Williamsburg, the kind of place where the bartenders look like they actually drink.

In the next room, everyone dances as Allyson spins a mix of old and new hip-hop. And it’s here that Heems looks most relaxed. He circulates, and seems to know everyone from his days at Wesleyan. Towards the end of the night, a beautiful white woman named Jocelyn arrives. She and Heems talk. They both look smitten. At 3am he apologizes, but he won’t be able to drive me home as planned. But before we part, he sends one of his friends home with me in a cab to save some cash. How very mayoral indeed.

Later in the week, he emails me, “Does your piece end with me going home with a beautiful white woman?”

(You know, just in case I thought he was too much of a sensitive soul and not an accomplished player, which would be way too desi and not nearly hip-hop enough.)

“Because it should,” he writes. 🍷

# STUNNING HOMES FROM EGYPT, KENYA, MOROCCO & MOZAMBIQUE



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# THINK

Weed: Uday Benegal  
**NEW** Relationships: Nick Smith  
Art: Kishore Singh  
Design: Ayaz Basrai



# 146

## SMOKIN' GUNS

BY UDAY BENEGAL

IT'S TIME TO PASS  
THE DOOBIE

IMAGE: COURTESY UDAY BENEGAL; SHUTTERSTOCK AND GETTY IMAGES

I've got the answer to world peace. It's born of the earth, easy to grow, deliciously fragrant, looks really pretty and is all-salubrious. Even its name sounds like something a poet would call her lover: marijuana.

But this isn't another "have a doobie, maaan, everything's byooootiful" spiel (that'll come later). Right now I'm talking colossal, industrial-sized machinations for the express purpose of peace on the planet. First, we muster all the technology required to harvest, extract, mix and spark enough cannabis to get a village high. Then, we develop a way to harness and contain the vaporous elixir. Finally, we hotbox every war zone, battlefield and arms-training camp we can find, fumigating the fuckers to a state of inertia. They'll crumble in a heap of grins. ISIS on a murderous spree? Smoke-up the suckers to the ground. Rioters on the rampage? Tase them with THC. Border forces getting belligerent? Pipe 'em back down to peacetime. Nobody on weed ever started a war.

Now, I'm not a pothead. The first time I smoked ganja was soon after I'd passed my tenth standard board exams. "School's out forever!" I'd echoed Alice Cooper. In celebration of our liberation, a couple of buddies and I booked ourselves on the (now-defunct) Bombay-Goa ferry, where we met an Irish gardener and his girlfriend. They invited us to join their circle of temporary friends who were passing around a chillum. By the time it came to me, I had watched their technique closely. My left hand cupping it expertly, I turned my right one into a funnel through which I sucked hard and drew deep. I thought my chest was going to cave in. But what immediately followed was a becalming wave that softened every edge that resided within me. I had no trouble sleeping on the sweltering deck that night.

I barely smoked weed for years after that little Goan trip. Somehow, it never seemed to feel right when I was in the city, and I was in a city most of the time. But a hundred moons or so later, after a stint of life in Versova (maybe that was the problem) and then New York, something changed. When I returned to Bombay, the urban brawl of colliding energies I'd run from was not only still here but all pumped up and fixing to fight. What had changed was my internal makeup. I'd begun to look at things differently – a little

EVERY TIME I SMOKE, I'M REMINDED OF WHY NATURE PUT THIS PLANT INTO HER WOMB. IT DOESN'T JUST CALM – IT HEIGHTENS EVEN AS IT LIGHTENS. MY SENSES, ESPECIALLY MY EARS, PROBABLY THE MOST SENSITIVE OF MY FACULTIES, BECOME AWARE OF A NUANCED CLARITY OTHERWISE CLOUDED BY CLUTTER AND DISTRACTION

less harshly, a bit less judgmentally. That's the good thing about stacking up the years; you start to understand that you don't know squat. And you begin to accept more than you did when you believed you were the shit. That experience leads me to advocate for smoking marijuana a little later in life, after you've done some time.

I still don't smoke often, but every time I do, I'm reminded of why nature put this plant into her womb. It doesn't just calm – it heightens even as it lightens. My senses, especially my ears, probably the most sensitive of my faculties, become aware of a nuanced clarity otherwise clouded by clutter and distraction in my "normal" state. I start to hear more clearly. That delicate snare drum pattern in that song playing softly on the stereo? I can hear every hit, bounce, rattle and ghost note my ears were missing before the spliff came around. I get so tuned in, it's crazy.

What's crazier is that this wonder plant is still illegal in India. Sensory perception is one thing; marijuana's power as a palliative is a whole other story. I witnessed that power myself when I saw the effect one little joint had on a buddy of mine who'd been suffering for a year from debilitating

lower back pain. After just a few drags of some primo Manali maal, his pain vanished. The western world, most significantly that hypocritical hub of pharmaceutical pandering, the US, is beginning to realize just how beneficial this herb can be to people suffering from the most severe pain. The same nation that lobbied India to make illegal a plant revered for centuries by healers and sages for its medicinal properties has begun to correct its own shortsightedness, legalizing medical marijuana in a number of states. That the people of this country still have to talk in code and whisper in corners to get even a little bit of the stuff is baffling. The myths have long been debunked – gateway drug (piffle), addictive (false), harmful to your health (no more than too much salt, far less so than alcohol or tobacco) – but lawmakers have been too slow to acknowledge it.

At a conference in Bengaluru this May organized by a group called GLM (the Great Legalisation Movement, India), local and overseas campaigners called for the legalization of marijuana in India. That could be one of this government's most progressive moves. And it wouldn't even contravene but rather hew to its own religious beliefs. Imagine a day when the Indian prime minister offers a visiting dignitary a toke of the good shit. Make in India, baby. Followed by a plate of sev puri when the munchies hit. 🍀

Uday Benegal likes listening to José González after he's smoked a fat one





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**RULES OF  
ENGAGEMENT**

BY NICK SMITH

**HOW TO KEEP HER HAPPY  
(AFTER THE FIRST YEAR)**

I've been with the same person for seven years now. I'm not claiming to be an expert, but I have learned a few things along the way, some of which may be helpful to others.

I don't say any of this smugly – I know I could often do with heeding my own advice. In fact, halfway through writing this list of pick'n'mix tips, I stopped to take my wife breakfast in bed. It is true what they say: happy wife equals happy life.

Make a fuss of her on her birthday. If she says she doesn't want a fuss, it means she wants a fuss. If in doubt: fuss.

She can pick faults in her family; you can't. You might both be saying the same thing, but you don't have the authority to say it. Knowing that will save you many a pointless argument.

Every problem doesn't have to have an instant solution. That's Man Thinking. Sometimes she just wants to talk about a problem and know you understand. That's Woman Thinking.

Make an effort: leave the toilet seat down; change for dinner; pick your boxers off the floor. Don't be selfish. If you're making yourself a sandwich, ask if she wants one. It's the little things.

She can decorate the place and make everything a whiter shade of pale if she likes (just put your foot down on pink). But the deal is you get to choose all the electronics. However, when she says that TV is too big, she's right.

Say "I love you" to each other every day. You both need to hear that. Hold hands in public. But no tongues. Eat dinner at the table. Talk about your respective days. Talk about anything. Just talk.

Don't let her come between you and your friends. It's even possible to make your friends hers too, but they'll always be mainly yours. Maintain some semblance of independence. It's called the Boys' Night Out – a once-a-month free pass to drink, swear, shout, expel gas and suffer an I'm-never-drinking-again hangover with impunity.

There has to be give and take. If she makes you watch *Sex And The City* or have dinner with her freaky cousin, that's a FUN credit in the bank for you to redeem as you wish. (Remember, FUN credits work both ways.) If you can't handle the freaky cousin, develop an impossible-to-disprove medical condition, such as migraines or a bad back, as a Get Out Of Jail card. Do not overplay it, lest any telltale behavioural pattern be discerned. It should be a last resort.

Arguing is normal – arguably healthy, even. Don't bottle things up. But no swearing or threats. That's a line you never cross. Sorry doesn't have to be the hardest word. Just say it. And no "sorry but..."

Simply say sorry and shut up. The next word should be hers. The last shouldn't always be yours. Shush.

Never let the sun set on an argument. You'll sleep like crap, wake up feeling crap and go to work feeling crap. Enjoy the make-up sex. At least something good can come out of the bad.

Tell her she's hot. Make an effort to stay attractive for her. Don't let complacency go to your gut. Repeat after me: none of her friends are "hot" – even if they unquestionably are. They're "kind of pretty, I guess".

Don't get caught in the Web. Naughty bookmarks are difficult to

explain away. Click on "Clear History". Don't fall for the much-touted idea that honesty is always the best policy. There are some things it's just not helpful for her to know. If the truth hurts her, consider whether that truth ought to be told.

Book a surprise weekend away every year. Get her best friend in on the act to help. This will do your reputation no harm. Don't sleep on the couch or in the spare room. It's your place too. She wouldn't, that's for damn sure. Don't get a dog until you're prepared to do most of the walking, feeding and cleaning up. I'm told it's good practice for a baby. (We haven't got there yet.)

Learn what her dad drinks and take him a bottle when you visit. Remember her mum's and best friend's birthdays. They're allies you need to keep close. But don't go overboard wooing them – that would be weird.

Trust her: jealousy is corrosive, self-confidence is sexy. Don't give her reasons for mistrust. Remember: there's no such thing as harmless flirting.

Pay for house bills out of a joint account. You

shouldn't have to pay for it all. This isn't the Seventies. Learn how the washing machine and dishwasher work. Do your fair share. There's no such thing as Woman's Work. This isn't the Seventies. It's your job to put the bins out, dispose of lizards and fix stuff. (There is such a thing as Man's Work, apparently.) Use this double standard to your advantage. God knows you could do with having the moral high ground once in a while.

Find a TV series box set you both love. Then, over the next few months, watch every episode together. Go to bed at the same time. Learn to spoon. Take her breakfast in bed once in a while. Make every Wednesday date night. Dinner, the cinema, a picnic at home curled up on the sofa in front of that box set. Doesn't matter, as long as it's time set aside for the two of you. And McNulty from *The Wire*.

Send flowers, but never to the house. That's a wasted chance to make you look good to her work friends. Flowers are expensive. Extract the maximum value.

Don't take your relationship for granted. Sounds glib, but it's the most important rule of all.

Good luck. 🍀

Nick Smith is the Editor in Chief of GQ Australia





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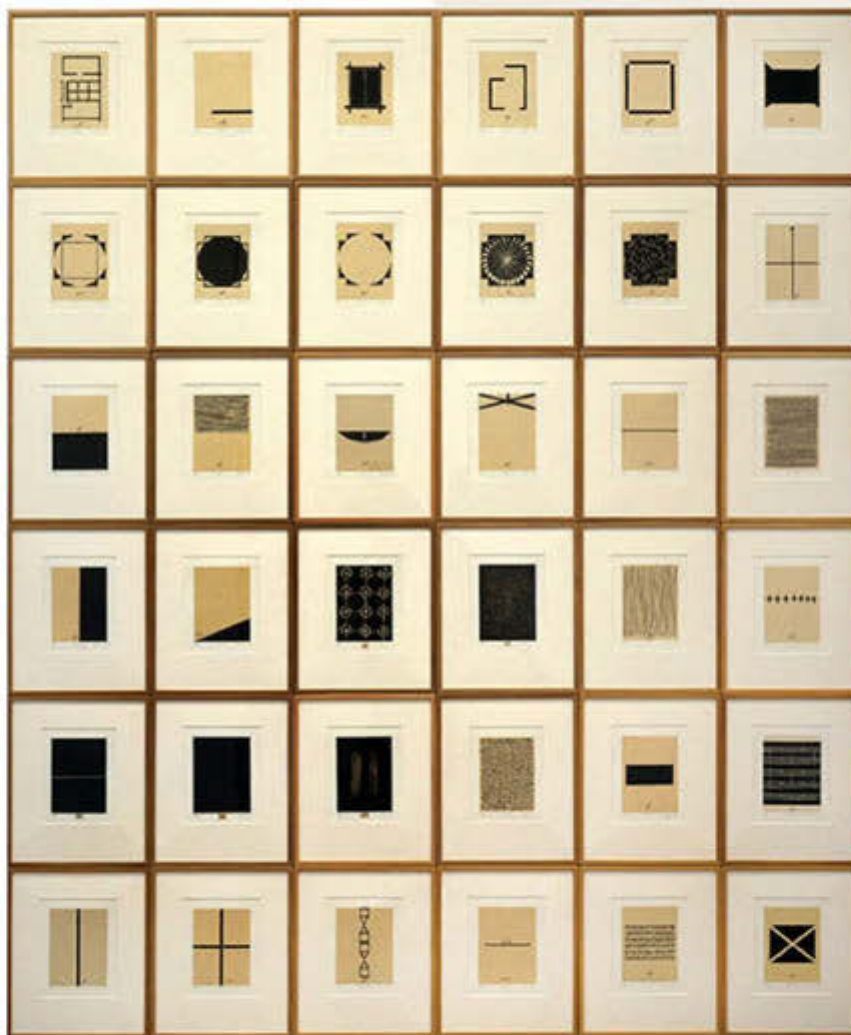
## STORMING THE BASTION

BY KISHORE SINGH

### MEET THE FEMALE TRAILBLAZERS OF MODERN INDIAN ART

In death, as in life, Amrita Sher-Gil could set heartbeats racing and make hearts stand still – a contradiction she mastered as India's first “modern” artist, having dissed the efforts of her peers. She may not have sold much in her tragically short lifetime – she died at 28 – but she was well-known, having courted maharajas and flirted with bureaucrats, painted nudes and posed topless. She was as breathtakingly beautiful in life as in her self-portraits, one of which went under the hammer in New York this March for a whopping \$2.92 million, or ₹18.1 crore. Seven decades after she died, Amrita Sher-Gil is finally getting her due.

Women artists were rare in the formal world of art at the start of the 20th century. Sunayani Devi, of the eponymous Tagore family, might have been a vanguard, but her subjects seemed to consist exclusively of milkmaids and bejewelled village belles. Amrita Sher-Gil's fierce indictment of such sentimental paintings marked the first thrust towards an “Indian modernism”. It was a while before other artists joined her rank, though, creating contexts that emerged from their everyday lives. They could be decorative, as B Prabha's fisherwomen invariably ended up being. Or abstract, as the world discovered of Zarina Hashmi at her Guggenheim retrospective in 2013. →



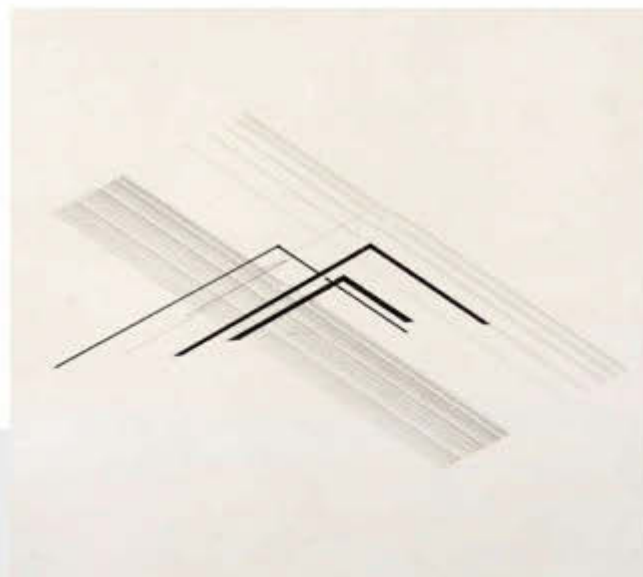
← Zarina Hashmi

*Home Is A Foreign Place* (1999). Portfolio of 36 woodcuts, with Urdu text printed in black on Kozo paper



← Gogi Saroj Pal

*Hat Yogini* (1996). Gouache on paper



↑ Nasreen Mohamedi

*Untitled* (circa 1980s). Ink and graphite on paper

PHOTO: © ZARINA: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND LUHRING AUGUSTINE, NEW YORK (HOME, BLINDING LIGHT); GOGI SAROJ PAL (HAT YOGINI); PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK, COURTESY TALWAR GALLERY, NEW YORK/NEW DELHI (UNTITLED); SHOBHA BROOHA (UNTITLED 14); ARPITA SINGH AND VADEHRA ART GALLERY (WISH DREAM)



◀ **Shobha Broota**  
*Untitled 14*  
(2011). Acrylic  
and oil on canvas

Or minimalist, as in the case of Nasreen Mohamedi's work, in which each line is imbued with emotion. The New York-based Hashmi's work has been a quest for the lost geographies of her homelands, and Mohamedi worked despite a rare neurological disorder and severe pain that claimed her life when only 53 years old. Still, she painted as though her life depended on it, exiling herself to a life of loneliness in Europe, where the serrations of the sea on the beach would inform the perfect lines of her work.

When Arpita Singh had become the most expensive woman artist in India – a mural by her sold for ₹9.6 crore in 2010 – sceptics had wondered at it. Didn't she concern herself with the ordinary? Yet, it is this "ordinary" that has extraordinary resonance. Guns and airplanes threatened her existence, violence lurked round the rose bower, there was deceit in the air. Arpana Caur's paintings too point to similar calamities of a social fabric rendered, genocide and the healing touch provided by teachers and keepers of the faith, who sew it back.

Many women do bring in the spiritual, and the feminine divine, in their work – whether it's Gogi Saroj Pal with her predatory Kali stalking the earth with a bleeding, severed head, or Shobha Broota's meditative force. The chain-smoking, outspoken Pal has an unusual take on feminism that is rooted in India's nurturing environment. "You are a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother," she says, explaining why her female *nayikas* are shown either tethered, unable to escape these familial ties, or are self-absorbed, oblivious to

the male gaze but refusing to surrender to it. From being subjects, these artists have made the transition to proponents of art.

Mostly, though, women artists have had to struggle to hold their own in a man's world – ironically, even as painting or the creative arts are considered a female or effete field – and recompense for their efforts has been prejudicial. And yet, this has not stopped them, as contemporary artists, from commanding the market with as much authority, like Bharti Kher; opening up the space for discussion as Nalini Malani; manipulating nostalgia like Anju Dodiya and Reena Saini Kallat; or bringing in political discourse like Anita Dube. Artist for

▶ **Arpita Singh**  
*Wish Dream* (2001). Oil on canvas



#### NEW ON THE BLOCK

Bharti Kher has made the sperm-shaped bindi her calling card, Reena Saini Kallat studies memory and geography, Anju Dodiya recalls ancient myths, Ranjani Shettar creates a world of delicate shadows. All of them believe in art beyond their own sex.

artist, they've stood their ground, questioning gender discrimination and marginalization not only in their lives but also in their practice.

Many have paralleled the lives of their artist spouses: Bharti is as well known as Subodh Gupta, and equally successful; Anju is more visually articulate than the highly regarded Atul Dodiya; Reena is impressing her search for our lost histories in a manner that's different from Jitish Kallat's futuristic works set within a technological framework. Nor must it be easy. Do they compete for the same awards, fellowships and outings at biennales and exhibitions? How do they tackle vulnerability – theirs as well as those of their partners?

As they steer the course of debates and discussions with their art, the female artist is no longer a novelty. Eight decades after Amrita Sher-Gil had stormed the bastions of Indian art, she's being feted for her striking originality. That it was accompanied by her glamorous beauty and tempestuous lifestyle is the icing on the cake. 🍰

*Kishore Singh is a critic and art consultant*

▶ **Zarina Hashmi**  
*Blinding Light*  
(2010). Okawara  
paper gilded with  
22-carat gold leaf







# 152

## TAKING THE GREEN LINE

BY **AYAZ BASRAI**

### SKY PARKS AND ROOFTOP GARDENS – WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF OUR CONCRETE AND GLASS CITIES

**T**he Grand Trunk Road, built by Sher Shah Suri and stretching over 2,500km from Chittagong to Kabul, Afghanistan, is one of Asia's oldest and longest roads. A wide succession of rulers have added to, and modified, its ancient infrastructure to make it more usable and safer for the vast community of travellers over the centuries. The overwhelming majority of trees planted along the GT are banyans, a species with massive shady foliage and far-reaching life, with some trees clocking over 500 years. The vision of the rulers, who chose mulberry and other broad-leaved trees to create cooling canopies over hot stretches, is admirable. To plant a tree that would outlive the context in which it's planted is an act of great humility and forward-thinking, something we seem to desperately lack in creating five-year plans for our cities. Imagine a 500-year plan for Mumbai, and what that might look like.

Picture a city where each structure is some form of garden. There is a building harvest, where the fruits of the carefully planned terrace gardens are equally distributed, and societies have access to the fresh produce, farmed right above them. Herbs are pesticide-free and controlled at the source. Children have active growing environments to engage with, not manicured golf courses. Skywalks are elevated gardens, and mass transit systems

grow local herbs on their rooftops that are sold at a discount at stations.

Mumbai is one of the densest cities in the world, with over 20 million people crushed into its confines. Given space crunches of this kind, it's almost impossible to imagine massive parks or gardens dotting the city. Yet the future lies in new initiatives, ranging from "micro" urban farming to new forms of dissent like guerilla gardening.

Rooftop gardens and communal vegetable patches are already populating our landscape, creating tiny pockets of resistance and beauty on an otherwise bleak concrete and glass canvas. This is a trend that will eventually play out at a city level, with progressively minded governments backing community projects, even subsidizing them and providing comprehensive frameworks for setting these up. Vegetables and fruits will be fresher, and available at a much-discounted price, with the gardeners deciding what to grow and how to make best use of the produce. Surplus may sometimes even be sold to fund the next round of planting. Shaan Lalwani, founder of Vriksha Nursery in Mumbai, is an active participant in this

scene. "We've seen a steady rise in people wanting to set up small urban, edible green spaces – in their home windows, balconies and terraces, or any other open space they can get their hands on. Young homeowners especially are flooding their balconies with all kinds of herbs and vegetables, and sharing the harvest with friends." It's an encouraging development, and one that's only going to scale up.

Some of the most forward-looking governments in the world are partnering with local design agencies and architectural practices to develop park-bridges – open spaces that synergize with transport systems, such as Heatherwick Studio's fantastic Garden Bridge proposal that spans the Thames in London, and is set to open in 2018. Closer to home, the Mumbai Port Trust's central kitchen is a beautiful example of this symbiosis. Situated at the Victoria docks, it caters to over 2,000 employees, and generates almost 20kg of kitchen waste daily. In a remarkably radical step, the employees set up a 3,000sqft garden on their kitchen terrace, beginning with two saplings in 2002, which now houses more than 150 varieties of flowers, fruit, herbs and medicinal plants.

At the diametric other end of these initiatives, one finds the activist art track, a zone of rebellion and activism. Guerilla gardening movements are finding momentum across the world, where disused plots are being repurposed to create accidental gardens, thereby adding a new vitality to otherwise ignored areas. Seed bombs are the weapon of choice of these urban green warriors: where a small time-bomb of mulch, fertilizer and wildflower seeds thrown onto a small patch of earth suddenly erupts into surprising bursts of colour on sidewalks – even under sewage grates and gutters. New-age street art styles include Moss Art, where a mix of curd and moss is used on old walls to create living content, a weird new interaction where living things fuel creative output. It's a trend that's erupted in the West and is starting to take root locally too, among India's more socially conscious artists.

What we're witnessing is the birth of a new civil war of the best kind, where the green stages a comeback against the inhospitable forces of our toxic cities. Both sides are hiring aggressively, training rigorously and consolidating their forces. Choose your weapon. 🌱

*Ayaz Basrai is the co-founder of the Busride Design Studio*

PICTURE A CITY WHERE EACH STRUCTURE IS SOME FORM OF GARDEN. SKYWALKS ARE ELEVATED GARDENS, AND MASS TRANSIT SYSTEMS GROW LOCAL HERBS ON THEIR ROOFTOPS THAT ARE SOLD AT A DISCOUNT AT STATIONS





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WATER-REPELLENT  
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Featuring ★ **NAMIT KHANNA** ★ **PRATEIK** ★ **AKSHAY OBEROI**

SPORT

NO

Your summer  
suits just  
got KO'd by  
designer-refined  
athletic wear

PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
**ARJUN MARK**

STYLED BY  
**TANYA VOHRA**



BOMBER JACKET  
BY **PHILIPP PLEIN**.  
T-SHIRT BY **AMI**.  
TROUSERS BY **NEIL  
BARRETT**. HIGH-  
TOPS BY **GIUSEPPE  
ZANOTTI**





POLO SHIRT BY DIOR  
HOMME, TRACK PANTS  
BY ZEGNA.  
SOCKS BY ADIDAS.  
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GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI







SUIT BY ANTONIO  
MARRAS. VEST BY  
G-STAR RAW





★  
VEST BY **ADIDAS**.  
TRACK PANTS BY  
**DSQUARED2**. HIGH-  
TOPS BY **GIVENCHY**  
BY **RICCARDO TISCI**



★  
VEST, SHORTS;  
BOTH BY **DIRK**  
**BIKKEMBERGS**.  
HIGH-TOPS BY  
**GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI**



A full-page portrait of a man with a beard and intense gaze, wearing a green hooded jacket over a white shirt. He has white headphones around his neck and is holding a white cloth or bandage in his hands. The background is a solid light blue.

★  
JACKET BY  
**RICHARD JAMES.**  
T-SHIRT BY  
**CORNELIANI.**  
HEADPHONES  
BY **SONY**



★  
T-SHIRT, SHIRT,  
SHORTS, ALL BY  
GIVENCHY BY  
RICCARDO TISCI.  
HIGH-TOPS BY ETRO.  
WATCH BY CHOPARD.  
BACKPACK BY DIRK  
BIKKEMBERGS





★  
ON NAMIT:  
SUIT BY **GUCCI**.  
T-SHIRT BY  
**AMI**. HIGH-  
TOPS BY **LOUIS**  
**LEEMAN**. WATCH  
BY **DIESEL**

ON PRATEIK:  
BLAZER BY  
**CANALI**. JACKET  
BY **LACOSTE**.  
PANTS BY  
**VALENTINO**.  
HIGH-TOPS  
BY **GIUSEPPE**  
**ZANOTTI**. WATCH  
BY **EMPORIO**  
**ARMANI**

ON AKSHAY:  
BLAZER BY **DIRK**  
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T-SHIRT BY **YMC**.  
CHINOS BY  
**DIESEL**. HIGH-  
TOPS BY **LOUIS**  
**LEEMAN**. WATCH  
BY **CHOPARD**

★  
JACKET, TRAINERS;  
BOTH BY **PUMA**.  
CHINOS BY **PHILIPP  
PLEIN**. WATCH BY  
**EMPORIO ARMANI**.

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RAVNEET CHANNA  
**ASSISTANT STYLIST:**  
DESIREE FERNANDES  
**HAIR:** SHEFALI  
SHETTY/BBLUNT  
**MAKE-UP:** XAVIER  
D'SOUZA/FATMU  
**SET & PROPS:**  
BINDIYA & NARII  
**PRODUCTION:**  
VASUNDHARA  
SHARMA





IN THE



LAIR OF

# KING JONES

Menswear designer **Kim Jones** has given **Louis Vuitton** some serious streetwear cred. But rest assured, the iconic Monogram and Damier aren't going anywhere

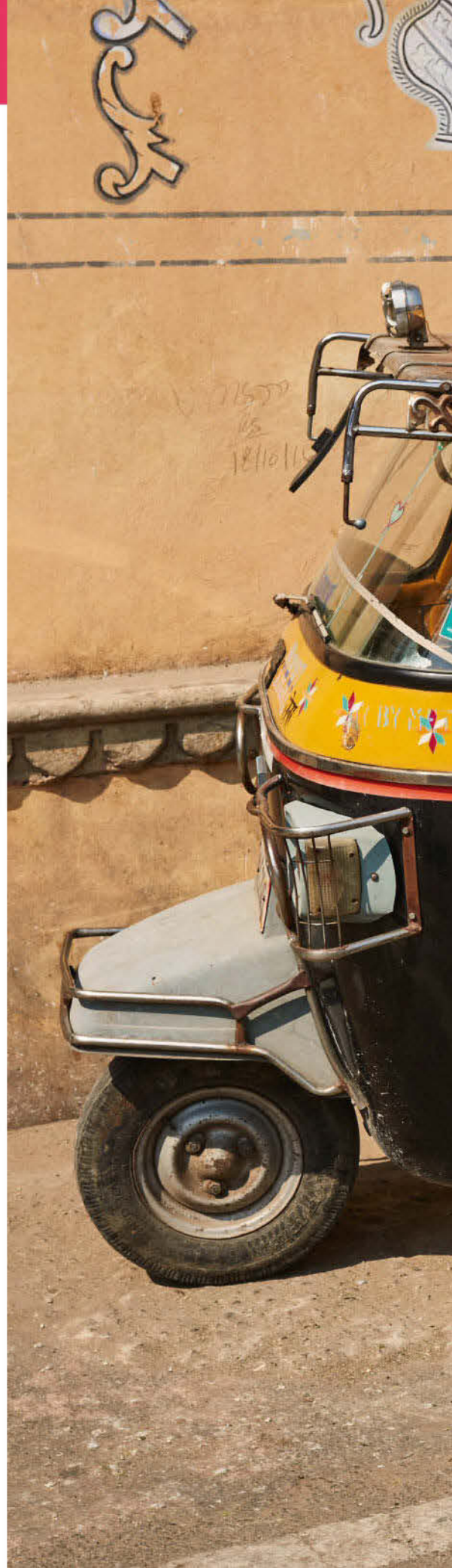
Photographed by **ADRIAN MESKO**    Styled by **GRANT PEARCE**  
Written by **SHIVANGI LOLAYEKAR**

W

hen I meet Kim Jones on the sprawling lawns of Jaipur's Rambagh Palace, he's wheezing from what he thinks might be hay fever. He's just arrived on the red eye from London, but it's his third trip to Rajasthan and Louis Vuitton's Style director is getting pretty used to the desert atmosphere. The first time Jones was here, it was to scour vintage fabrics, royal courts and maharaja costumes. He was in the process of putting together his latest collection, and had come to the right place.

It's easy to get inspired in Jaipur: palaces line busy streets and ancient ruins coexist with a developing world, a juxtaposition that makes for an engaging perspective. Especially for Jones, who had so far based every one of his collections on a new city. Then Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer 2015 show was unveiled in Paris. And it had none of the flamboyance you'd expect from being inspired by India. The clothes were modern and wearable – a man in Santa Fe would look as much at home in them as a man in Tokyo. India was in the details: colour, mirror work and sundials made their way on to silhouettes that would appeal to any stylish man.

And that's the crux of Kim Jones' genius. Since joining Louis Vuitton in 2011, he's infused it with his edgy streetwear aesthetic, while still retaining LV's timelessness. Unlike his peers at other fashion houses, Jones doesn't depend on an influential circle of friends (Kate Moss and David Beckham, from a long list) or intend to create groundbreaking fashion that no one in the real world would wear. His low-key manner belies his ambition to make LV the brand of the zeitgeist. And he's doing it very cleverly, using travel as his catalyst – something that's always been LV's epigraph, and core to Jones' life. It's why he's riding high and showing no sign of slowing down. Besides, who wouldn't want a passport stamped from Atacama to India, even if it comes with a little sniffing?









# ON INDIA

"I'm very much about hands-on research. The first time I came to Jaipur, I was looking for things that could lend to the collection and the show. I was looking for the real essence of luxury – the way maharajas lived and the fact that they had this relationship with Louis Vuitton trunks. I was looking at the kind of lifestyle in India where men played polo... the Air Force, guys on the streets – they wore a really cool silhouette with a chic Seventies vibe. It was ahead of Europe, it was ahead of everywhere. You'd see it in India and then you'd see it in other parts of the world, without realizing that India's the birthplace for a lot of things, a melting pot of cultures. I wanted to celebrate that: a modern India."







## THE BEATLES ARE A PART OF SPRING/SUMMER 2015, TOO

"What's really special in this collection are the trunks we did inspired by The Beatles coming to India. We did a record box, and a guitar case, as well."

## THE MONOGRAM AND DAMIER AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE

"They are iconic but they're so easy to work with. For this collection we did the Monogram linings because I wanted to do something that was less branded but still had the real essence of the brand. Louis Vuitton himself was very much a modern man. He was doing things that no one was doing at that time. He really thought about functionality."



## *Personal style? No, thanks*

"I wear what I feel comfortable in. There are different clothes for different occasions but I normally wear chinos or jeans with a shirt or a sweatshirt, something that's really easy. I normally don't think about me, I think about everyone else I'm dressing."

## *Kim's still got street cred...*

"I've injected a lot of my sportswear aesthetic into Vuitton. Men who buy our clothes do it to facilitate their lifestyles. We do a lot of formal suits but are now looking at ways to make that comfortable for a guy. At the same time, men buy clothes for their leisure time. When I talk about sportswear now, I talk about American sportswear - it's a whole wardrobe. It's not just sporty clothes, it's a bit more grown up, because I've grown up a bit."

## *...And then some*

"I've got some T-shirts from Ethiopia that I've had since I was about 10. I love the graphics on them and they've always stayed in a box in my house. They're cool, vintage wildlife T-shirts, very Seventies and weird. I was very particular about what I wore when I was a child. I'd drive my parents mad. Up until the age of five, I'd refuse to wear clothes, and then when I started wearing clothes, I'd wear one colour from head-to-toe."

## *John Galliano likes Kim Jones*

"He bought half of my collection for research when I was studying at Central Saint Martins. I just remember being very upset because one of those blazers took me five months to make and it was the only one I'd made. But that's an amazing compliment for someone like him to wear your clothes."

## AROUND THE WORLD

"I grew up in Africa but we always went back to London and Europe because I'm half Danish. We'd travel all the time and that's why it's second nature to me. I lived in very remote parts of Africa and saw Maasai warriors and Afar tribesmen. They had this amazing look, wore loads of colour and interesting silhouettes. It was style. You don't need to have money to have style. It can come from anywhere."



## GOING FORWARD

"We have a really good base for what we do at Vuitton. The idea is to continue to keep it very steady. Even with this collection, inspired by India. It was a celebration of colour, pattern, shapes and styles, but with the same message: travel, functionality, tradition, technology."

## THE NEW SEASON

"When I was 14 and got back to London, my sister was moving out of the house and she threw her magazines into a pile. I picked them up and the first things I saw were Christopher Nemeth's designs on a page of *i-D*. I realized then that I wanted to do fashion design, and he's been a real inspiration since. For me, Nemeth was a master pattern-cutter - and not trained. He was an artist and an illustrator obsessed by anatomy and understood the human body very well. He's the central force of our Fall/Winter 2015-16 collection."





**“I LOVE FACTS AND FIGURES, I KEEP ABSORBING  
INFORMATION – I’M VERY VISUALLY AWARE OF THE  
WORLD AND THAT’S ONE OF MY STRENGTHS”**



**PHOTO ASSISTANT:**

TUCKER WYDEN

**FASHION EDITOR:**

JACKY TAM

**HAIR & MAKE-UP:**

GEORGIOS/

ANIMA TALENT

**WARDROBE:** LOUIS

VUITTON

**MODEL:** SARVESH

MAMGAI/FLYING

PIGS PRODUCTION

**PRODUCTION:**

SUHANA SHARMA,

BHAVNA PATEL/

FLYING PIGS

PRODUCTION


**LOCATION:**

JAIPUR

DOWNTOWN,

JAIGARH FORT





# TROPIC THUNDER

Beat the rain and book your next flight out.  
From the boardwalk to the beach and the  
bodega to the bar – we've got you covered

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JC DE MARCOS


TROUSERS BY  
H&M. BROGUES  
BY CHURCH'S



1. BOOTS BY **CLARKS**
2. TIE BY **BRIONI**
3. SNEAKERS BY **MUNICH**
4. BROGUES BY **PAUL SMITH**
5. LOAFERS BY **MANGO MAN**
6. BRIEFCASE BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**
7. WALLET BY **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO**
8. WALLET BY **SALVATORE FERRAGAMO**
9. WALLET BY **STEVE MONO**
10. BAT BY **HACKETT LONDON**
11. BRIEFCASE BY **HERMÈS**





- 
1. SNEAKERS BY  
**GUCCI**  
2. POUCH BY  
**BOTTEGA VENETA**  
3. BACKPACK BY  
**EMPORIO ARMANI**  
4. OXFORDS BY  
**LOTTUSSE**  
5. SLIP-ONS BY  
**HERMÈS**  
6. DOUBLE  
MONKSTRAP SHOES  
BY **DSQUARED2**  
7. BAG BY **LOEWE**  
8. WALLET BY  
**DOLCE & GABBANA**  
9. GLASSES BY  
**GIORGIO ARMANI**





SUIT BY GUCCI.  
SHIRT BY MASSIMO  
DUTTI. SHOES BY  
EMPORIO ARMANI





SUIT BY **FAÇONNABLE**.  
BROGUES BY **SALVATORE**  
**FERRAGAMO**. BRIEFCASE  
BY **GIORGIO ARMANI**



- 
1. SOCKS BY  
**ERMEGILDO ZEGNA**  
2. BOOTS BY  
**G-STAR RAW**  
3. OXFORDS BY  
**MASSIMO DUTTI**  
4. SNEAKERS BY  
**REEBOK**  
5. SNEAKERS BY **BOSS**  
6. BAG BY **LOEWE**  
7. POUCH BY **LOEWE**  
8. WALLET BY  
**STEVE MONO**  
9. WALLET BY  
**LOUIS VUITTON**

**ASSISTANT STYLIST:**  
PATI SIRÉ, LAURA  
AGUILAR  
**PRODUCTION:**  
INMA BARANDICA  
**MODEL:** EDUARDO L/  
SALVADOR MODELS





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Plan it.  
Experience it.



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winning hand

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AT THE TAJ



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THE WEDDING DESIGN COMPANY



The Crest  
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ANJU MODI  
JADE BY MONICA AND KARISHMA  
MANISH MALHOTRA  
MONISHA JAISING  
SABYASACHI  
SANIA MASKATIYA  
SHANTANU & NIKHIL  
TARUN TAHILIANI  
VARUN BAHL  
VINEET BAHL 'PREMIERE'

**A**  
**DESTINATION**  
TAJ

**A**  
**THE EXPERTS**  
ANAITA SHROFF ADAJANIA  
DR HARSHNA BIJLANI  
KINITA KADAKIA PATEL  
NAMRATA SONI  
SAVIO JOHN PEREIRA  
VANDANA MOHAN

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**GIFTING & SERVICES**  
AHUJASONS  
EKAYA  
LAKSHMI  
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NORDIC KANDIE  
RAVISH KAPOOR INNOVATIVE  
INVITATIONS  
SWAROVSKI  
SWATI & SUNAINA  
TEA CULTURE OF THE WORLD  
WEDGWOOD  
WEDNIKSHA WEDDING  
PLANNERS

**A**  
**JEWELLERS**  
AMRAPALI  
ANMOL JEWELLERS  
BHARANY'S  
BIRDHICHAND  
GHANSHYAMDAS  
BN JEWELS  
DIACOLOR FINE  
CONTEMPORARY JEWELS  
HAZORILAL BY  
SANDEEP NARANG  
HAZORILAL LEGACY -  
SOUTH EXTENSION  
KHANNA JEWELLERS  
KISHANDAS & COMPANY  
FOR SABYASACHI  
MEHTA & SONS  
RAJ MAHTANI  
ROSE  
SUNITA SHEKHAWAT JAIPUR  
TIBARUMALS JEWELLERS



# THE 15

## BIOGRAPHIES EVERY MAN SHOULD READ

*Nothing against that Booker-winning piece of magic realism or anything, but sometimes fiction can feel a bit, you know, made up. Instead, learn from the outsized triumphs and monstrous mistakes of these superlative specimens: actors, athletes, artists and other giants of industries whose names don't necessarily begin with the letter 'A'*

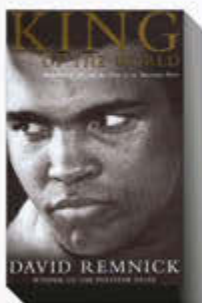


# 1

### MUHAMMAD ALI **KING OF THE WORLD**

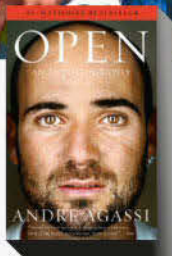
BY DAVID REMNICK (1998)

Behold: the greatest boxer of all time getting treatment from a narrative-journalism heavyweight. The Champ had been written about as much as any athlete ever, but David Remnick did more than tell a story narrowly focused on Ali's individual experiences with victory and vice. Rather, he crafted a broad social and political narrative, then placed the famed pugilist within it. It's a biography of a man as much as it is a biography of a myth – "an American myth," Remnick writes, "who has come to mean many things to many people: a symbol of faith, a symbol of conviction and defiance, a symbol of beauty and skill and courage, a symbol of racial pride, of wit and love."





2



**ANDRE AGASSI  
OPEN**

By Andre Agassi (2009)

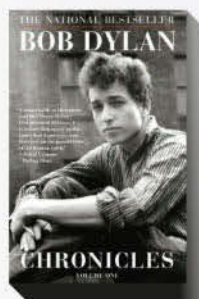
This is the psychologist-couch confessional (that's really how Agassi and his collaborator, JR Moehringer, worked through it) that all great sports books strive to be. The abuse of youth training; the depths of disappointment and heights of ecstasy, recounted with acuity; the coming-clean of celebrity dating and crystal meth. (It will put you at ease that you were never the star athlete you'd hoped you'd be.) This would be a crazy book from any athlete; that it's from one of the most talented and popular tennis players in history makes it all the more irresistible.

3

**BOB DYLAN  
CHRONICLES:  
VOLUME ONE**

BY BOB DYLAN (2004)

The most written-about songwriter of all time put an end to others' attempts by writing the weirdest, most wonderful version himself. Dozens of writers had tried before, but it took Dylan doing Dylan to get to the heart of it: impressionistic line-writing, fractured chronologies, rivers of metaphor, elliptical anecdotes and – for those looking for a little more grounding than the poetry provides – cameo-filled set pieces of the most satisfying sort. Rarely is there a moment when we learn how A led directly to B, but there's a concerted effort to relate not how something was but how something felt/seemed/appeared to have transpired. And Volume Two is still on the slate.

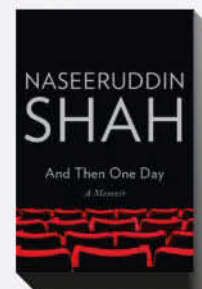


4

**NASEERUDDIN SHAH  
AND THEN  
ONE DAY**

By Naseeruddin Shah (2014)

In an industry prone to haughty deflection of anything that might dare cloud the halogen glow of stardom, the legendary actor writes plainly and openly about the critical junctions of his life, even the dirty bits. Laying it all out may be a function of age – what does he have to lose now anyway? – or maybe it's that the tome only covers his life up to age 32, thus preempting his most gossip-ready phases. You may not get Shah's laundry list of bedded Bollywood babes, but as far as origin stories go, you will understand what went into the making of this stalwart of stage and screen.



5

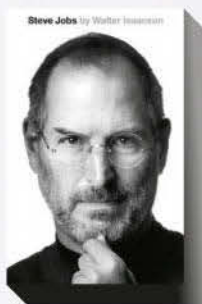
**ALFRED HITCHCOCK  
A LIFE IN DARKNESS  
AND LIGHT**

BY PATRICK MCGILLIGAN (2003)

He's the most widely examined film director of all time, and he's still wildly misunderstood. McGilligan's book is a master course for anyone interested in movie-making, a boring-down into the relationships with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly and company, and a more suitably complex building-out of the 2D perversions (and stalker accusations) that have come to cloud his legacy in recent decades. It's a hugely big book that never feels long – the definitive take on the master.







6

## STEVE JOBS

BY WALTER ISAACSON  
(2011)

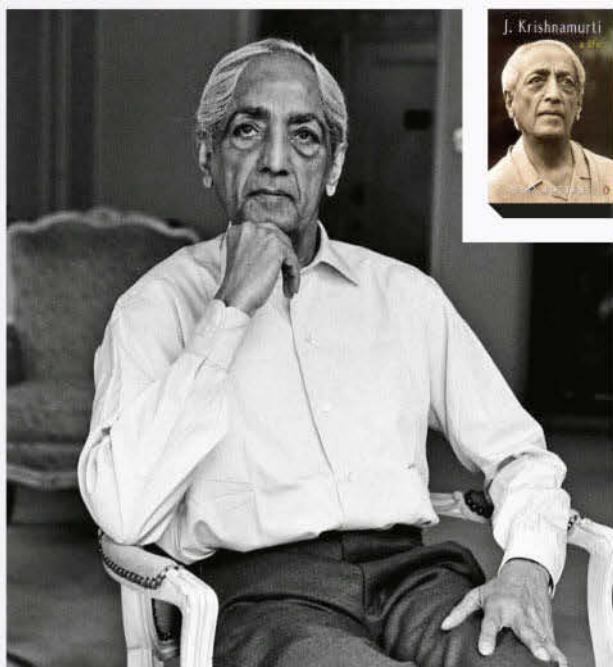
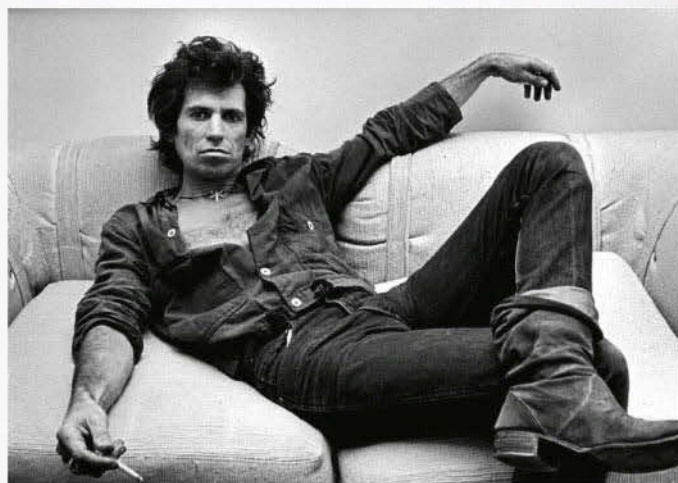
It's a panoramic tribute to a singular mind; the definitive portrait of the definitive company; a playbook for engineers, designers and managers in tech and the wider world; an "Idiot's Guide To Seventies Start-ups And Noughties Revivals"; a manual for megalomania (and veganism); and a best-seller of such magnitude that it's dumb to opt out. It's the only book your less readerly bros have read since college, but don't let that suggest anything other than the fact that Jobs offers up entry points for countless kinds of men.

## 7 KEITH RICHARDS

### LIFE

By Keith Richards (2010)

**Because:** Keith. Because: the Stones. Because: Mick, Charlie, Ronnie, Brian, Bill & Bobby. Because: Smack, Jack & Coke. Because: Altamont, Hyde Park & Nellcôte. Because: Open G tuning & the blues. Because: Two bars of "Malagueña" and you're in. This is the best book ever written about sex, drugs & rock 'n' roll.



## 8 JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

### A LIFE

BY MARY LUTYENS (2005)

Jiddu Krishnamurti died in 1986, but today's India would do well to revisit the writings of this unassuming Tamil Nadu-born philosopher. He didn't wear any funny hats, never drove a Rolls Royce, and no devotee sex scandal has ever touched him. He didn't even want you to necessarily spread his message: "Do not repeat after me words that you do not understand," he wrote. "Do not merely put on a mask of my ideas, for it will be an illusion and you will thereby deceive yourself." And that right there is how you cull the boys from the men, the milquetoast questers from the real thinkers. And if you're willing to call yourself out on your own bullshit, he only gets better from there.



## 9 ROBERT EVANS

### THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE

By Robert Evans (1994)

Evans wrote the Great Hollywood Memoir. A "half-assed actor" in the Fifties, he then became the head of Paramount Pictures. *Rosemary's Baby*, *Love Story*, *The Godfather*, *Chinatown* – that sort of rap sheet. He was the consummate Hollywood cad – he's been married seven times – and film inspiration for Dustin Hoffman in *Wag The Dog*. He strove to be an unapologetic original, a true north he followed to heights from which he had a singular view of the industry. Today's straight-shooting, publicity-choked middle ground will make you restless once you've tasted this.

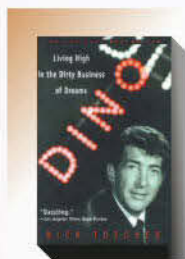


## 10 DEAN MARTIN

### DINO

BY NICK TOSCHES  
(1992)

*Dino* was the first tell-all about this inscrutable star – it's also the best. Tosches pulls no punches in this unauthorized biography, which traces the Rat Packer from his early days as Dino Crocetti, a teenage gambler in Ohio, to Dean Martin, a marquee name with a \$500 nose job, a cross-media sensation before "cross-media" was a thing. But Tosches is interested in more than fantastic celebrity; in unsparing detail, he traces Dino's sad, slow decline into a twilight of pills and booze. The result is a lesson in what not to do when you reach the end of your prime.





11

## WILLEM DE KOONING DE KOONING

By Mark Stevens & Annalyn Swan  
(2004)

De Kooning's toilsome life defies all the stereotypes of what it means to be a "modern master". Sure, aspects of the Abstract Expressionist's life fit the bill of an artist's biography - he made the scene at the Cedar Tavern in Greenwich Village with Rothko and Kline, kept up an intense rivalry with Pollock, drank himself into the gutter and swapped out lovers like painting aprons. But everything else will force you to revise the way you think genius works. Learn to be great, but mostly learn to be patient. He'd grunt and scrape at his canvases for months at a time, painstakingly inching his way towards immortality.

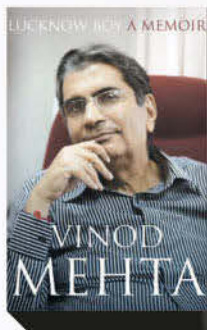
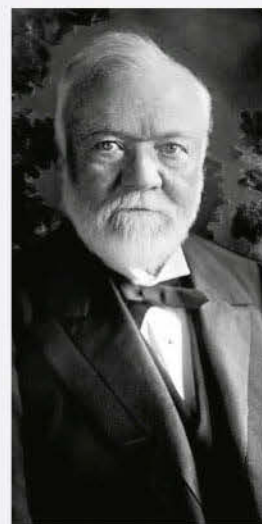
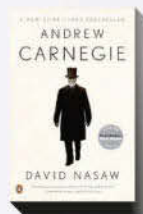


12

## ANDREW CARNEGIE ANDREW CARNEGIE

BY DAVID NASAW (2006)

Of all the American robber barons, Andrew Carnegie feels the most modern. The most likable, too - though that may sell him short (which, at five feet, he was as well). He was born a pauper and became, in the words of financier JP Morgan, "the richest man in the world". Sure, Carnegie was no saint. In the laissez-faire Gilded Age, righteousness was rarely rewarded. He sold crap-ass securities and used an early railroad gig to ink insider deals that set him up in the steel business. He made his first million by 35 but vowed to die penniless and began funding libraries, museums, concert halls and colleges - setting an example that modern plutocrats like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett aspire to today.



13

## VINOD MEHTA LUCKNOW BOY AND EDITOR UNPLUGGED

By Vinod Mehta (2011, 2014)

We may have lost Vinod Mehta in March this year, but one small concession is that the founding editor-in-chief of *Outlook* magazine left us not one but two volumes of memoirs: *Lucknow Boy* and *Editor Unplugged*. Dig into either, and any notions of bifurcation-for-profit are dispelled. Mehta has been around long enough to simply have that much to say, and when he says it so well - the pith and wit of a man holding court with a series of anecdotes at a cocktail party - even his multi-page screed on Rupert Murdoch feels... What's that word so often forgotten in journalism? Oh right: Fun.

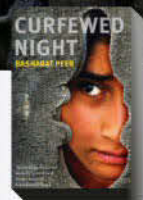


15

## BASHARAT PEER CURFEWED NIGHT

By Basharat Peer (2010)

Of all our entries, we're kind of cheating on this one. *Curfewed Night* is, technically, neither biography nor autobiography. You'll find it at the bookshop filed under fiction. But the childhood scenes of growing up in Kashmir in the fraught mid-Nineties are straight from Basharat Peer's experience. When you read about the irreplaceable contents of a father's library under threat from the blunt force of military ordinance, you know the pain and longing is not made up. Until someone's memoir tops it, *Curfewed Night* stays on this list. ☹

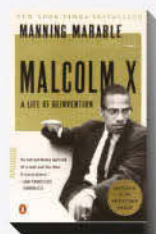


14

## MALCOLM X A LIFE OF REINVENTION

BY MANNING MARABLE (2011)

America in 2015 looks a hell of a lot more like the dire 1964 that Malcolm described in his landmark "The Ballot Or The Bullet" speech than the cuddly future Martin Luther King put forth in "I Have A Dream". Yet what's so striking about Marable's book is how the supposedly rigid beliefs of Malcolm's fiery militant foil were constantly evolving, and how he came to have no allies, just enemies - which makes this book as suspenseful as a double-agent spy novel.





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# GROOMING

EDITED BY SHIKHA SETHI

+ REAL MEN WEAR FLORAL SCENTS

## Objects OF desire

GQ test-drives five new tricked-out gadgets that are smarter, sleeker and more efficient than anything you've seen before

PHOTOGRAPHED BY  
JIGNESH JHAVERI

### BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY!

If you sport facial hair, you know how easily your genial morning trim-and-buzz routine can escalate into a fit of swearing when a corner of your beard is carelessly nicked. Think of the world's first smart trimmer as your wingman. When switched on, a laser pops out from those blades and indicates the line along which you need to clip your facial hair. With 17 pre-programmed trim lengths and a minimum setting of 0.4mm, you'll be able to shape your beard or goatee with deft precision. Just stay within the lines.

**Philips** BT9280, ₹7,500; [philips.com](http://philips.com)





## THE BEST ICED SHAVE

There's no way you're still using a Nokia 6600 or your company-issued BlackBerry – like everyone else, you “got with it” and switched to a real smartphone. That's why you need to change electric razors too. The Braun CoolTec is the iPhone 6 of shavers right now. Essentially a repackaged Series 3 with Thermo Electric Cooling (TEC) technology, it reduces skin irritation that comes from repeatedly driving those tiny blades over your face. That said, the CoolTec won't work on your long hipster beards, and it won't give you the kind of clean shave you'd get with a cut-throat razor – few electric shavers will. But you won't walk out of your bathroom tomato-faced from a skin rash after using it. Which, in our books, is a win.

**Braun** CoolTec Shaver, approx ₹13,800; [braun.com](http://braun.com)



## BRUSH YOUR FACE BEFORE BED

*(and in the morning)*

You've spotted it in your girlfriend's bathroom, but didn't dare ask what it was. "It" is a Clinique Cleansing brush, which uses 9,000 good vibrations a minute to scrub your mug – dislodging dirt and grime far more effectively than washing your face with soap and water could. The device is waterproof, and doesn't need to be charged too frequently, so you can easily pack it in your DOPP kit for a short work trip or a weekend away. The only thing that's not cool? Sharing your girl's brush.

**Clinique** Sonic System  
Purifying Cleansing Brush,  
₹12,500; [clinique.in](http://clinique.in)



*Tilt the brush head and move the green bristles up and down to clean your T-Zone*



*Gently massage your cheeks with the soft white bristles. Unclogged pores mean less ingrowths and less irritation while shaving.*

**GQ TIP:** Use a pea-sized amount of clear gel with the brush, never a scrub. And just like you would with your toothbrush, replace the head every three months, or as soon as the bristles start fraying.



## THE LAWNMOWER FOR YOUR NOSE (and ears)

The only creatures on whom visible nose and ear hair is acceptable are trolls. And the BFG. Not you. Just twist the bottom of the Philips Ear & Nose Hair Trimmer to get it humming and buzz any unsightly stragglers. Then rinse and put it away until you need it again two weeks later. It's far more efficient than using a mirror and scissor and trying desperately not to nick yourself, and there's no uncomfortable pulling either. Plus, at under ₹1,000, it's a slam dunk purchase that will help you avoid a major grooming turn-off.

**Philips** NT1150 Ear and Nose Hair Trimmer, ₹995; [philips.com](http://philips.com)



## THE COMB OVER... SO YOU DON'T NEED A COMB-OVER

Your hair's thinning and you're panicking (quite rightly). A transplant seems too dire but all the densifying hair products you've been using are having zero effect. Your best shot is this laser comb from Advanced Hair Studio that uses low-level laser light to energize the follicles on your scalp and stimulate hair growth. You'll need to use a special serum and conditioner too, but the extra effort is worth it. Because when it comes to hair loss, the golden rule is: You gotta work hard to keep what you've got – while you've still got it. Just ask Warney.

**Advanced Hair Studio Laser Comb;** AHS' Fitness Programme starts at ₹75,000 and includes the device, prescribed medication and consultations with AHS trichologists; [advancedhairstudioindia.com](http://advancedhairstudioindia.com)



### HOW TO USE IT:

Starting from the hairline, place the comb flat on your scalp, so both rows of teeth are touching it. Leave it there for four seconds. Once you hear a beep, move the device about half an inch further down, without lifting the device off your scalp. Repeat till you've covered your entire head. Do this every alternate day.



# Are you **man** enough to wear **floral**?

It takes confidence to use a scent you might find on your girlfriend's dresser. No wonder smelling like a rose is the new power move

**W**hen I was five, my sister decided she was tired of having a little brother. So she outfitted me with a dress, a palette's worth of dark blue eye shadow, a shock of red lipstick and a healthy spritz of Primo!, our mother's Giorgio knockoff, then paraded me in front of our parents. My father surveyed his only son, now a tiny drag queen answering to "Denise", and brushed all that aside in favour of the big issue: "Boys shouldn't smell like flowers." The next day, we took an emergency fishing trip.

If recent mass-market fragrance trends are any indication, some of your favourite perfumers suffered similar childhood traumas. Popular brands are increasingly offering "extreme" or "intense" formulas, featuring higher concentrations and added notes of leather, coffee and musk and packaging that looks like it rolled off the Aston Martin assembly line. And while there's nothing inherently wrong with a signature scent that screams "I'm an M-A-N!", such loud olfactory statements can seem like conspicuous compensation for shortcomings unseen. Instead, try the ultimate in quiet, confident masculinity: smelling like an orange blossom, a gardenia or a heliotrope.

And, really, why not let the flower power shine through? You've already been wearing florals – though they may have been obscured by an overspiced, mossed-out fog or omitted from the name. The industry's dirty little secret is that it's been peddling petals to guys the entire time. "All men's fragrances have florals in them," says Eric Weiser, co-owner of Twisted Lily, a boutique in Brooklyn. "They just don't always advertise them." Weiser estimates that 95 per cent of his stock is unisex and has noticed an uptick in the popularity of jasmine scents among male clientele, an indication that consumers are rejecting the sexual compartmentalization of fragrance.

## TRY THESE



**DUNHILL DESIRE BLACK**  
(APPROX ₹5,300)



**LALIQUE HOMMAGE À L'HOMME** (APPROX ₹4,400)



**LE LABO FRAGRANCES ROSE 31** (APPROX ₹4,500)


"Flowers grow from the earth," he says. "Does that make them feminine? Or is dirt masculine?"

Christopher Brosius, perfumer and founder of the fragrance line CB I Hate Perfume, doesn't consider gender when he creates a scent, and he encourages others to sniff with an open mind. "Every now and then, there's a surprise," he says. "A guy you'd consider a 'dude' will choose To See a Flower – a mix of hyacinth, crocus, daffodils and jonquils. It's about 'Do you like the way it smells or not?' It's that simple." Of course, considering a scent's appeal to those with whom you share space is also wise, a fact I learned one night while test-driving Maison Francis Kurkdjian Paris' Oud Satin Mood. As I slid close to my wife in hopes of seducing her with rose essence and vanilla, she blurted, "You smell like my grandma's friend Harriett – she's dead." Oddly specific mood-killing message received. The following evening's offering, Byredo's orris-infused Gypsy Water, inspired more affection, and she liked Le Labo's Rose 31 so much that she started stealing it from me – so she'd be reminded of me throughout the day, or so I tell myself – a bit of medicine-cabinet petty larceny that's apparently not uncommon. "We often have couples wearing the same scent," Brosius confirms. "It becomes a bond."

Fortunately for any man who bristles at the thought of swapping gold filigree atomizers with his girlfriend, bottle designs vary as widely as the concoctions within – from the pink petal detailing of L'Artisan Parfumeur's Rose Privée to Lalique's violet-centric eau de toilette, whose manly art-deco flacon was inspired by the Orient Express. Niche-market fragrances are largely eschewing sex-indicative packaging altogether, according to Mindy Yang, curator of the SoHo-based perfumery MiN New York. "We created a gender-neutral shape that's modular and modern," she says of the bottles for Shaman, a signature unisex eau de parfum which incorporates notes of violet and rose in addition to incense, patchouli and absinthe. "Because we do witness how design and decoration affect purchase decisions."

One last thing to consider: While your newfound floral freedom may announce to the world that you're a self-assured tuberose man, what you choose to reveal beyond that is up to you. "If you want to run through a field of flowers, nobody's going to give a damn," Weiser concludes. "If guys are secretive about what they're wearing, it's only because they don't want their buddies copying their scent." 🌹





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For more, see  
**LISA RAY: THE  
PIN-UP'S GUIDE  
TO THE GALAXY**  
on PAGE 127

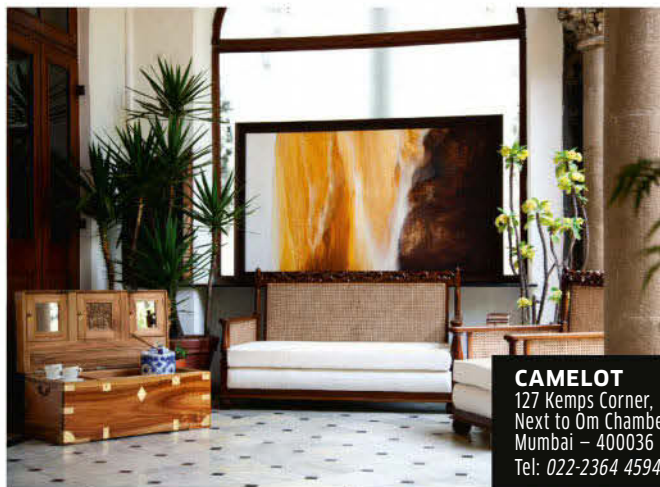


## RAY OF LIGHT

It takes a timeless location like Mumbai's **Camelot** store to shoot an equally stunning beauty like **Lisa Ray**

**W**hen you come across a secluded 100-year-old bungalow in the middle of bustling Mumbai, you wish for time to stop so you can take all of it in. Much like when you meet the subject of *GQ*'s sumptuous shoot, Lisa Ray.

The leggy supermodel is the answer to every man's dreams: an eternal pin-up woman. A lover of old-world elegance. And of this colonial-style furniture store in particular. As photographer Farrokh Chothia captured her wandering around the sprawling verandahs, sunlit terraces and through ivy-covered doorways, she could be overheard saying, "I wish I'd hosted my wedding here!" 🍷



**CAMELOT**  
127 Kemps Corner,  
Next to Om Chambers  
Mumbai - 400036  
Tel: 022-2364 4594







ON NAMIT:  
T-SHIRT BY LACOSTE, JACKET BY RAEY, JEANS, WATCH, BOTH  
BY DIESEL, SHOES BY CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

ON AKSHAY:  
T-SHIRT, JEANS, BOTH BY EMPORIO ARMANI,  
JUMPER BY HACKETT LONDON, WATCH BY CHOPARD,  
SHOES BY VALENTINO

ON PRADEIK:  
VEST BY GUCCI, JUMPER BY MICHAEL KORS, JEANS BY  
EMPORIO ARMANI, WATCH BY DIESEL, SHOES BY CLARKS

● **A**  
**Adidas** Mumbai, 99 3007  
9114; Delhi, 011-4573 4261;  
Bengaluru, 080-4091 5678  
**Ami** (amiparis.fr)  
**Anita Dongre** Mumbai,  
022-6634 0923  
**Antar-Agni by Ujjawal**  
**Dubey** (ujjawaldubey.com)  
**Antonio Marras**  
(antoniomarras.it)  
**Ashish N Soni** Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4606 0955  
**Audemars Piguet** Mumbai,  
Time Avenue, 022-2651 5858;  
Delhi, Kapoor Watch Co,  
011-4134 5678

● **B**  
**Being Human** Mumbai,  
022-2660 1190  
**Bell & Ross** Mumbai, Time  
Avenue, 022-2655 5757; Delhi,  
Ethos Summit, 011-4058 8700  
**Bentley** Mumbai, 022-6671  
0907; Delhi, 011-2412 1717  
**Blackberrys** Mumbai,  
Phoenix, 022-2492 4282; Delhi,  
Ambience, 011-4087 0084  
**Bombardier**  
(bombardier.com)  
**Bordelle**  
(bordelle.co.uk)  
**Bottega Veneta** Mumbai,  
The Galleria, 022-3027 7090;  
Delhi, DLF Emporio, 011-4609  
8272; Bengaluru, UB City,  
080-4173 8931  
**Breakbounc**  
(breakbounc.com)  
**Breguet** Mumbai, Time  
Avenue, 9819 73127; Delhi,  
Johnson Watch Co,  
011-4151 3121  
**Breitling** Mumbai, Times of  
Lord, 022-2369 5254; Delhi,  
Kapoor Watch Co, 011-4653  
6667; Bengaluru, Rodeo Drive,  
080-4173 8825  
**Brioni** (brioni.com)  
**Brooks Brothers**  
Mumbai, Palladium, 022-2265

9950; Delhi, Ambience,  
011-4087 0786  
**Burberry** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-4080 1990; Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4652 9850;  
Bengaluru, UB City,  
080-4173 8825

● **C**  
**Calvin Klein Jeans**  
Mumbai, 022-2648 4794; Delhi,  
011-4059 7502; Bengaluru,  
080-4098 6227  
**Canali** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-4009 8685; Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4604 0731;  
Bengaluru, UB City,  
080-4173 8997  
**Celio** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-4080 2301  
**Chopard** Mumbai, 022-2288  
4757; Delhi, 011-4666 2833;  
Bengaluru, 080-4098 2100  
**Christian Louboutin**  
Mumbai, 022-4347 1787; Delhi,  
011-4101 7111  
**Church's** (heelandbuckle.com)  
**Clube Bossa**  
(clubebossa.com)  
**Clarks** Mumbai, High Street  
Phoenix, 022-6749 5061; Delhi,  
DLF Promenade, 011-4650  
8023; Bengaluru, Phoenix  
Market City, 080-6726 6052  
**Clinique** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-4347 3774  
**Corneliani** Mumbai, 022-6631  
1303/4; Delhi, 011-4604 0722;  
Bengaluru, 080-4173 8170

● **D**  
**Daher-Socata** (tbm.aero)  
**DC** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-6634 5011  
**Diesel** Mumbai, 022-2661  
8282; Delhi, DLF Emporio, 011-  
4052 3915; Bengaluru, UB City,  
080-4173 8004  
**Dior Homme** Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4600 5900  
**Dirk Bikkembergs**  
(bikkembergs.com)

**Dolce & Gabbana**  
(dolcegabban.com)  
**DSquared2**  
See The Collective  
**Dunhill** Delhi, 011-2336 6777;  
Bengaluru, 080-4173 8990  
**Dynomighty**  
(dynomighty.com)

● **E**  
**Emporio Armani**  
Mumbai, Palladium, 022-4347  
3211; Delhi, DLF Emporio, 011-  
4604 0783; Bengaluru, UB City,  
080-4146 9333  
**Ermenegildo Zegna**  
Mumbai, 022-2285 7000;  
Delhi, 011-4606 0999  
**Etro** (etro.com)

● **F**  
**Façonnable**  
(faconnable.com)  
**French Connection**  
Mumbai, 022-2648 2731; Delhi,  
011-4059 7575  
**Fossil** Mumbai,  
022-6677 7999

● **G**  
**Gas** Mumbai, 022-2600 0008;  
Delhi, 011-4051 2669  
**Geox** (geox.com)  
**Giorgio Armani** Delhi,  
DLF Emporio, 011-4606 0948  
**GivENCHY** (givenchy.com)  
**Giuseppe Zanotti**  
(giuseppezanottidesign.com)  
**Gulfstream**  
(gulfstream.com)  
**Graham** Mumbai, Rose The  
Watch Bar, 022-2362 0275;  
Delhi, Kapoor watch Co,  
011-4653 6667  
**Greubel Forsey** Delhi, Swiss  
Promotion, 011-4616 0505  
**G-Star Raw** (g-star.com)  
**Gucci** Mumbai, 022-3027  
7060; Delhi, 011-4647 1111

● **H**  
**H&M** (hm.com)

**Hackett London** Mumbai,  
Palladium, 022-4347 2888  
**Heel & Buckle** Mumbai,  
022-4022 3354  
**Hermès** Mumbai, 022-2271  
7400; Delhi, 011-4360 7780  
**HondaJet**  
(hondajet.honda.com)  
**Hublot** Mumbai, Rose  
The Watch Bar, 022-2362  
0275; Delhi, 011-2469 3712;  
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**Hugo Boss** Mumbai,  
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Emporio, 011-4604 0773;  
Bengaluru, 080-2520 7200  
**Hunter Original**  
(hunterboots.com)

● **I**  
**Izzue** (izzue.com)

● **J**  
**Just Cavalli**  
(justcavalli.com)  
**Jimmy Choo** Mumbai,  
022-3027 7070; Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4660 9069

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**L'agent by Agent**  
**Provocateur**  
(agentprovocateur.com)  
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4347 0190/4000; Delhi, DLF  
Promenade, 011-4617 0682/3;  
Bengaluru, 080-4147 6660/1  
**Lalique** (lalique.com)  
**La Perla** (laperla.com)  
**La Senza** Mumbai, 022-6736  
3563; Delhi, DLF Promenade,  
011-4104 2371; Bengaluru,  
080-6726 6344  
**Levi's** Mumbai, 022-264  
1101; Delhi, 011-4151 3345;  
Bengaluru, 080-3251 4943  
**Le Labo Fragrances**  
(lelabofragrances.com)  
**Loewe** (loewe.com)  
**Lottusse** (lottusse.com)  
**Longines** Mumbai, 022-6743  
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# WHERE TO BUY

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City, 080-4246 0000

**Louis Leeman**  
(louisleemanparis.com)  
**Louis Philippe** Mumbai,  
022-6527 0338

● **M**  
**Mango Man**  
(shop.mango.com/IN/men)

**Massimo Dutti**  
(massimodutti.com)  
**Michael Kors** Mumbai,  
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011-4056 3704  
**MUNICH**  
(munichsports.com)

● **N**  
**Neil Barrett**  
(neilbarrett.com)  
**Nautica** Mumbai, Palladium,  
022-4005 0822

● **O**  
**Omega** Mumbai, 022-6655  
0351; Delhi, 011-4151 3255;  
Bengaluru, 080-4098 2106

● **P**  
**Panerai** Mumbai, 022-2288  
5052; Delhi, Johnson  
Watch Co, 011-3231 5645;  
Bengaluru, Ethos Westminster,  
080-4163 6912

**Paul Smith** Mumbai,  
Palladium, 022-6658 9960;  
Delhi, DLF Emporio, 011-4604  
0744; Bengaluru, UB City,  
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(parkavenuselect.com)

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**Philips** Mumbai, 022-2493  
4400; Delhi, 011-2374 2578

**Philipp Plein**  
(philipp-plein.com)

**Prada** (prada.com)

**Puma** Mumbai, High Street  
Phoenix, 022-6725 3454;  
Delhi, Select Citywalk,  
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080-3016 0040

● **Q**  
**Quiksilver** Mumbai, 022-  
6634 5011; Delhi, Ambience,  
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080-6726 6376

● **R**  
**Raey** (matchesfashion.com)  
**Raymond** Mumbai, 022-2268  
6002; Delhi, 011-4702 2822;  
Bengaluru, 080-2206 7770  
**Reebok** Mumbai, 022-2202  
4250; Delhi, 011-4347 4660

**Richard James**  
See The Collective  
**Richard Mille**  
(richardmille.com)  
**Roberto Cavalli** Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4696 0000

**Roger Dubuis** Mumbai,  
Time Avenue, 022-2651 5757;  
Delhi, Kapoor Watch Co,  
011-4653 6667

**Rohit Gandhi + Rahul**  
**Khanna** Delhi, DLF Emporio,  
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**Rolex** Mumbai, 022-6625  
3600; Delhi 011-4699 0000;  
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● **S**  
**Salvatore Ferragamo**  
Mumbai, 022-3062 1018; Delhi,  
DLF Emporio, 011-4660 9084;  
Bengaluru, 080-3004 1854

**Shivan & Narresh**  
Mumbai, 022-2648 3773; Delhi,  
011-2653 6072

**Sony** (sony.co.in)  
**SS Homme** Mumbai,  
022-2651 1738

**Steve Mono**  
(stevemono.com)  
**Stutterheim**  
(stutterheim.com)

● **T**  
**TAG Heuer** Mumbai,  
022-3060 2001; Delhi,  
98711 98885; Bengaluru,  
080-4098 2109

**Tarun Tahiliani** Mumbai,  
022-2642 0643

**The Bro Code**  
(thebrocode.in)  
**The Collective** Mumbai,  
022-4343 8888; Delhi,  
011-4087 8888; Bengaluru,  
080-6767 8888

**Thomas Pink**  
Mumbai, Palladium, 022-4023  
6090; Delhi, Ambience, 011-  
4087 0783

**Tissot** Mumbai 022-2494  
0954; Delhi, 011-4375 1174;  
Bengaluru, 080-6726 6283

**T.M. Lewin** (tmlwin.com)  
**Tod's** Delhi, DLF Emporio,  
011-4666 2700

**Tom Ford** Delhi, DLF  
Emporio, 011-4103 3059

**Tommy Hilfinger** Mumbai,  
022-2646 2847; Delhi, 99 1169  
7222; Bengaluru, 080-2268  
2091

● **V**  
**Valentino**  
(valentino.com)

**Vector x**  
(vector-x.com)  
**Victorinox**  
(victorinox.com)

**Van Heusen** Mumbai,  
Palladium, 022-6615 2898;  
Delhi, 011-4164 7925

● **Y**  
**You Must Create**  
(youmustcreate.com)

● **Z**  
**Zara** Mumbai, Palladium,  
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Promenade, 011-4513 7124;  
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City, 080-6726 6121



# TOP SHELF

## MONSOON'S HOTTEST PICKS LINED UP FOR YOU



### Man Up! ↑

If you were looking for a way to get a heady dose of that intangible savoir faire and transform into a suave, sophisticated man of the world, Dunhill's Desire Black should be your go-to scent. A powerful fragrance that is the essence of the modern man, it hits all the high notes. With a first rush of black pepper coupled with the refined notes of bergamot, grapefruit and petitgrain, Desire Black captures the timeless elegance and intensity of the man who knows what he wants.

- Available at all PARCOS stores



### Wedding Wows ↑

Thailand is a lot of things to a lot of people – the perfect bachelor party destination, for instance. Now though, if Thailand Tourism has anything to say about it, you might want to reconsider your travel plans and stick around for your wedding as well. Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), New Delhi and Tourism Authority of Thailand, Mumbai along with Thai Airways International flew down India's top wedding planners to Pattaya. The objective? To showcase it as the ultimate wedding destination. Not a hard sell, given its stunning resorts, world-class hotels and breathtaking sights.

- For more information, visit [tourismthailand.org](http://tourismthailand.org), or email [tatdel@tat.or.th](mailto:tatdel@tat.or.th)



### Parisian Debut ↑

Tennis legend Steffi Graf was party to a different kind of history in Paris. Graf, the ambassador of elegance for Longines, did the honours at the inauguration of the Swiss brand's first monobrand boutique in France, along the Left Bank in Paris. The warm wooden interiors offer the perfect backdrop for the 500 iconic models, which include the Conquest Classic Moonphase, the official watch of Roland Garros. A museum, a VIP lounge and a team of experts to provide information on product lines round out the offerings.

- For more information, visit [longines.com](http://longines.com)



### ← Smart Casual

If you're a busy man about town, you need to arm yourself with the right stuff to get your work look just right. Samsonite's collection of business casual laptop bags ensures that you go about your business with a certain flair. Combining business and casual, the brand's CityVibe collection features versatile nylon laptop bags, and also a cabin-sized duffel on wheels. Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, the bags are as handy as they are smart.

- Price on request. Available at Samsonite stores and leading retail outlets across India

### Get Your Face On! →

The launch of the latest variant of Ponds' Pollution Out Face Wash, in collaboration with Disney's ABCD2, was all-out glamour, Bollywood style. It saw Ponds' Men brand ambassador, Varun Dhawan groove to the tunes from his upcoming movie while presenting the new product through 4D technology. This Deep Clean face wash removes micro pollution from deep inside and thoroughly cleans your skin – just the kind of thing to get you doing a little joyous jig of your own.

- Priced at ₹175 for 100g; ₹100 for 50g. Available across stores in India





## Liquid Luxury ↑

Glenfiddich makes history for a number of reasons – it's the most awarded single malt scotch whisky in the world; it's one of the last family distilleries and it's the result of some of the oldest whisky wisdom to pass down from generation to generation. Lovingly crafted by masterful experts with traditions of know-how, Glenfiddich's treasure trove includes the 12, 15 and 18 Year Old single malts that have been carefully matured in their casks. No wonder Glenfiddich whiskies are the most coveted by connoisseurs across the world.

- For more information, visit [glenfiddich.com](http://glenfiddich.com)



## Power Run ↑

If you wondered what it would be like to step into the shoes of the fastest man on earth, just buy the IGNITE, Puma's most responsive running shoe – and Usain Bolt's preferred footwear. Designed for maximum return on energy and to be comfortable and durable, the proprietary IGNITE foam, created after extensive research, provides perfect cushioning and lets you move at high speeds. The shoe takes inspiration from the shape of a comet – appropriate, given that its MO is to make you run like the wind.

- Priced at ₹8,999. Available at all Puma stores

## Summer on your wrist →

Luxury watchmaker Breguet had occasion to dial back in time for some stylistic inspiration. The reason? To create the masterpiece to mark the bicentennial celebration of Abraham-Louis Breguet's appointment as chronometer-maker to the navy. The result is the Breguet Marine Chronographe 200 Ans de Marine. A platinum-encased watch with a decidedly contemporary design, its gold dial with the matte black surface is offset by its understated rubber strap. This one's a definite keepsake. The bad news – there are just 200 of them.

- Price on request. For more information, visit [breguet.com](http://breguet.com)



## ← The Chosen One

European brand SELECTED Homme, recently launched in India and available online on Jabong.com, knows a thing or two about dressing to impress. Whether it's laid-back casual or the classically formal, SELECTED offers the choicest of clothing for the modern man. The brand features three lines to cater to all your sartorial requirements: Indigo includes denim, Heritage is for the smart casual look, and if you want sophistication, that's what you get with the perfectly tailored Identity collection.

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## Dear Superhero Movies,

Riddle us this, Superher – oh? What's that? You think an Open Letter to Superhero Movies isn't all that original, that it's all been done before? Well, that's sort of what we're saying. Look at yourselves, Superhero Movies. It's shameful to be so shameless. Just how many more of you can there be? There really are only seven possible plots in storytelling, and whether you're Theseus, Robin Hood or Dirk Diggler, the hero's plot graph is pretty much the same. And come on, how many more McDonald's collector cups does the world need?

It's been almost four decades since Christopher Reeve's Superman stretched his spandex onesie across the blue-screen sky of Metropolis: They didn't even have green screens back then. It's been over 50 years since Adam West imbued Batman with a sense of humour – neither Michael Keaton nor Christian Bale have been very gregarious Gothamites, though we're grateful that Val Kilmer's smarmy "chicks love the car" Batman seeped into a steaming sewer before *BuzzFeed* existed. George Clooney's Batman? Just don't. You'll only hurt yourself.

Perhaps the most anticipated on the roster is the *Man Of Steel* sequel, where, to contrast Henry Cavill's digitally enhanced Superman pecs, Ben "Mallrats" Affleck will serve as an antagonistic Batman in this clash of DC Comic titans. The whole affair will co-function as origin stories for Aquaman and Wonder Woman franchises, and they'll all meet again in *The Justice League*. But not before you'll be subjected to Marvel's re-cast *Fantastic Four*, another *X-Men*, a second *Wolverine* solo project, a *Doctor Strange* revival, and Robert "highest-paid-possible racist" Downey's Iron Man being tossed into the next *Captain America*. This will ensure people will see the film, because the *Captain Americas*, with their WWII plot anchors and down-home old-timey zeitgeists, have come off a bit provincial in the 21st century. (A provincialism unrelated to Cap's big-screen uniform torso looking more like a Puerto Rican sigil than the star-spangled banner.)

And another goddamn *Thor*, too? For what? To hedge Marvel's bets on the most bloated marketplace since dot-com Silicon Valley? What hope is there for poor Paul Rudd's *Ant-man*? Sounds like it's already gone the way of *Green Lantern* and *Daredevil* – which also starred Ben "Jersey Girl" Affleck. Have film-makers learned nothing from the career arc of Mr Gigli? How does he still get work? This guy must suck quite big golf balls through corporate garden hoses to keep getting this level of work.

And yes, way out there at the periphery of this cluttered super-orbit of sell-outs and steroids, there are the so-called parodies: The *Kick-Ass's* and the *Guardians Of The Galaxys*, and arguably that dull-ass *Green Hornet* thing too.

Even all the vampire movies those child-abused goth kids like, they've often crept close to superhero turf. But *Van Helsing* was panned back in 2004, and you can't just lob leading-man Colin Farrell into a remake of *Fright Night* and expect it to wet many pants (with frightened piss, we mean, you pervs. Go think about Colin Farrell's one honest, passionate, very very indie film performance on your own time). Besides, everyone knows there is no other vampire movie once you've seen *The Lost Boys*.

*Hgnungph*. This is all getting a bit fucking stupid now, guys. Well, everything except Wonder Woman getting her own movie. That's the one project we can get behind. That's one that's going to have something to prove. Because the most forgettable superhero screen outings have been the ones with female leads. Helen Slater as Supergirl? Halle Berry as Catwoman? Who? What? *When?* Correct.

We'd like to think times have changed, and Wonder Woman will be accepted and absorbed by the nerd fraternity, even if it's a gag-reflex to the *gavage* of superheroes being forced down our gullets.

Perhaps, as a popular image that made the rounds of social media recently suggested, in a film with Wonder Woman taking the lead she could lay out some ground rules, like she says in that one-frame comic to a gang of male superheroes dressed in some of her former high-cut outfits: "If I don't get pants, nobody gets pants."

Good for you, Wonder Woman. And please, in your first film or the next, can we have you, somehow, kill off Ben "Pearl Harbour" Affleck, please?

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